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## An Analysis of the Contribution of Professor C.H. Dodd to Johannine Scholarship in the English-speaking World

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Joseph Stephen King, B.A., Dip. Theol.

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### Abstract.

This dissertation is an analysis of the contribution of C.H. Dodd to Johannine scholarship in the English-speaking world from 1900-1975. It also places Dodd's Johannine studies in the context of his New Testament work, without which they are liable to be misunderstood.<sup>(41)</sup>

The analysis reveals that, despite his meticulous scholarship, Dodd was not an innovator in Johannine studies. The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel was the classical expression of an approach that had long been standard in English-speaking scholarship but it quickly became almost a 'child out of its time'. Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel gave definitive expression to a movement long-burgeoning in English-speaking scholarship yet Dodd did not 'weigh' the tradition that he recovered nor adapt his understanding of the Fourth Evangelist to the implications of his discoveries. Few scholars have realised that Dodd's two major Johannine studies are in tension with each other. Dodd apparently did not understand that the implications of Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel went against his long-held definitive understanding of the Fourth Evangelist as the 'Master Propagator' of Christianity to the Hellenistic world.<sup>(139)</sup>

Dodd was the most significant English-speaking New Testament scholar within this period yet his contribution to Johannine studies has been overestimated. He enjoys a reputation for changing his mind, but he never moved to essentially new positions. Any changes of position are minor compared to a central isolated and insulated consistency. He was not significantly influenced by his colleagues. Much modern Johannine scholarship is now discontinuous with that of Dodd. It has fastened onto insights that Dodd considered insignificant. Dodd's dilemma was that he was by nature inclined to pursue the quest for the historical Jesus for which the evidence of the Fourth Gospel is problematical whereas modern Johannine scholarship is rightly concerned with the quest for the Johannine community.<sup>(120)</sup>

Chapter I.

Opening Survey.

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In his Cambridge Inaugural Lecture, "The present task in New Testament studies", Dodd argued that the Johannine problem was the significant problem that nineteenth century scholarship had left unsolved; "The Johannine problem represents their most signal failure. The position at the end of the century was little better than a deadlock."<sup>(1)</sup> He averred "I am disposed to think that the understanding of this Gospel is not only one of the outstanding tasks of our time, but the crucial test of our success or failure in solving the problem of the New Testament as a whole."<sup>(2)</sup>

Dodd published his first article on the Fourth Gospel in 1911, "Eucharistic Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel":<sup>(3)</sup> it was his first biblical article. It might appear as though this brief study of Johannine criticism should end in that year. This is not so for a number of reasons, not the least being, that Dodd considered 1919 the end of an era,<sup>(4)</sup> but we may not halt at 1919. In fact, we shall conclude this review in 1929; by then J.H. Bernard's commentary had been published in "The International Critical Commentary" series, and G.H.C. Macgregor had published his commentary in "The Moffatt New Testament Commentary" series. Dodd reviewed Bernard's commentary in "The Congregational Quarterly"; this marked his being acknowledged as a Johannine scholar. Dodd concluded his review with these words, "The commentary, then, is in many respects a fine piece of work, to which the English student will constantly turn with gratitude, but we still want a good modern (my italics) commentary on the Gospel according to John."<sup>(5)</sup> Macgregor's commentary was an avowedly modern one.

Within the limitation imposed by the title of this study, the survey will primarily review the work of scholars from the English-speaking world, and will seek to outline the then dominant, and sometimes conflicting, positions. It begins with a brief summary of the position at the end of the nineteenth century.

All too often the Johannine problem, - where one was even recognised! was not examined for its own sake, or indeed in its own terms, but in the

interests of an understanding of Christianity. For example, J.B. Lightfoot declared that:

"The genuineness of St. John's Gospel is the centre of the position of those who uphold the historical truth of the record of our Lord Jesus Christ given us in the New Testament. Hence the attacks of the opponents of revealed religion are concentrated upon it. So long, however, as it holds its ground, these assaults must inevitably prove ineffective. The assailants are of two kinds:

1) those who deny the miraculous element in Christianity -

Rationalists:

2) those who deny the distinctive character of Christian doctrine - Unitarians.

The Gospel confronts them both."<sup>(6)</sup>

Ironically, one of the most able and ardent defenders of the traditional authorship in this period - the issue of authenticity and value was inextricably involved with the question of authorship - was to be the Unitarian James Drummond, in his "An inquiry into the Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel".<sup>(7)</sup>

Moreover, much of the writing has the character of committed advocacy. W.A. Sanday was well aware of this, and sought to forestall any criticism:

"What I have been saying amounts to a confession that my purpose is apologetic. I propose to defend the traditional view, or (as an alternative) something so near to the traditional view that it will count as the same thing. And yet I know that there are many minds, - and those, just the minds to which I should like to appeal, - to which this will seem a real drawback. There is an impression abroad, - a very natural impression, - that 'apologetic' is 'opposed to 'scientific'".<sup>(8)</sup>

Sanday's was to be a vigorous defence of the traditional view, it included much intemperate language of which the best known example is his charge of

libel against those who deny that the Fourth Gospel is the work of an eyewitness.<sup>(9)</sup>

Yet Sanday is one of several scholars who have altered their opinions to a significant extent. His traditional position was established and defended in three books<sup>(10)</sup> but in "Divine Overruling", 1920, he wrote:

"I'm afraid there is one important point on which I was probably wrong - the Fourth Gospel. The problem is very complex and difficult, and I have such a love of simplicity that I expect my tendency was to simplify too much, and to try too much to reach a solution on the ground of common sense. Perhaps I should say in passing, that the contribution to this subject which made the greatest impression on me in recent years, has been the article by Baron Friedrich von Hügel in the eleventh edition of the 'Encyclopaedia Britannica'." <sup>(11)</sup>

A greater contrast with the early Sanday can scarcely be imagined.

As the nineteenth century came to its end, English-speaking scholarship was pre-occupied with the question of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel. Typical of such scholarship was the work of J.B. Lightfoot, W.A. Sanday and B.F. Westcott, who marshalled the external and internal evidence with skill. They were impressed by the external evidence which led them to argue "That this most divine of all books was indeed the work of 'the disciple whom Jesus loved'".<sup>(12)</sup> From an examination of the internal evidence the famous concentric argument emerged; that the author was a Jew, a Palestinian Jew, an eye-witness, a disciple, and finally, the Apostle John. This argument was underpinned by Lightfoot's assertion that "In short, it (the Fourth Gospel) is the most Hebraic book in the New Testament, except perhaps the Apocalypse."<sup>(13)</sup> Lightfoot and Westcott, along with F.J.A. Hort, agreed that all five Johannine writings came from the Apostle.<sup>(14)</sup> The orthodox conservative opinion was repeated by H.R. Reynolds in the last year

of the nineteenth century; he used the now familiar arguments.<sup>(15)</sup>

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Different attitudes were prevalent on the Continent. Howard's verdict is sufficient; "At the close of the nineteenth century the debate seemed to have been fought in every aspect of the problem, and German scholarship had come with comparative unanimity to conclusions which then appeared radical to the majority of British divines."<sup>(16)</sup> The established critical position was presented by H.J. Holtzmann, who rejected the tradition of the Ephesian ministry of the Apostle John; moreover he "Declined to recognise in the Gospel bearing his name, a primary source for the historical life of Jesus,"<sup>(17)</sup> and argued that the Evangelist, who was not responsible for the Johannine Epistles, wrote in the first quarter of the second century, having been strongly influenced by Saint Paul and Philo. There were exceptions to this dominant approach<sup>(18)</sup>.

This significant difference between British and German scholarship was neatly epitomised by Howard in his comparison of the relevant articles in Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible" and "Encyclopaedia Biblica". Howard observed that "His (Reynolds') argument is closely knit and most impressive, until the other side is heard."<sup>(19)</sup> That other side was put by P.W. Schmiedel;

"This is a remorseless exposure of every difficulty that the traditional theory leaves unexplained. The argument in favour of apostolic authorship drawn from external evidence, which seems so strong in the familiar English apologetic, is now shown to be very vulnerable. But the extreme scepticism of the writer weakens the argumentative force of the article. The Gospel is allowed no independent historical value, and its authorship is regarded as evidently distinct from that of the epistles."<sup>(20)</sup>

There were a number of attempts to rescue something of the traditional authority of the Gospel; these often took the form of ascribing it to a disciple of the Evangelist. Sanday welcomed such mediating theories as he had the amount of common ground between the conservative and critical

scholars, but noted that as the century drew to its close this was replaced by a polarisation of views.<sup>(21)</sup> It was in this context that British writers began to defend the traditional view with skill and vehemence. Rarely was new argument advanced.

B.F. Westcott.

A strange feature of Howard's discussion of Johannine scholarship, "In Britain and America, 1901 - 1913", is the one very slight reference to Westcott's work and this is the only reference in the book, apart from one in the bibliography. This is the more surprising in view of its subsequent use by commentators such as Bernard, Macgregor, Hoskyns and Barrett, and later still by Lindars. The explanation may be sought in the "The Gospel according to St. John", 1908, being anticipated by his commentary in the "Speaker's Commentary" series, 1880, and thus strictly outside the scope of his chapter. Certainly, as A. Westcott, Westcott's son, indicates in his prefatory note, Westcott was not able to incorporate all of his work in the volume in the "Speaker's Commentary" and some of this, going back as far as 1870, found expression in the commentary of 1908. Our view is that a short overview of Westcott's work forms a proper part of our survey. It will concentrate on those aspects which are important in the light of the ongoing debate in our period.

Westcott, in an exhaustive analysis, did as much as anyone to strengthen the case of Apostolic authorship.<sup>(22)</sup> He argued that John son of Zebedee wrote the Gospel in Asia at the end of the apostolic age. Although an eyewitness, John was thus remote from the Ministry that he describes. The Gospel thus may in a correct sense be called a work of transition; "In the last quarter of the first century, the world relatively to the Christian Church was a new world; and St. John presents in his view of the work and Person of Christ the answers which he has found to be given in Him to the problems which were offered by the changed order".<sup>(23)</sup> He noted particularly the problem occasioned by the Fall of Jerusalem, the rise of Gentile churches, owing much to Paul's preaching, and the contact

of Christian theology with philosophical speculation;<sup>(24)</sup> He commented on the treatment of the Jewish nation in the Gospel; "Inexorable facts had revealed the rejection of the Jews. It remained to show that this rejection was not only foreseen, but was also morally inevitable, and that it involved no fatal loss. This is the work of St. John".<sup>(25)</sup>

The purpose of the Gospel is to demonstrate the universality of Christ; "He makes it his purpose to show that Jesus, who is declared by that human name to be truly and historically man, is at once the Christ, in whom all types and prophecies were fulfilled, and also the Son of God, who is, in virtue of that divine being, equally near to all the Children of God."<sup>(26)</sup> There is no special polemic in the Gospel, though by virtue of his expression of the truth, the Fourth Evangelist opposes both Docetism and Ebonism as it also answers Gnosticism.

There is a discernible plan to the Gospel<sup>(27)</sup> from which it is apparent that the main criterion is theological or thematic. He forestalled any necessity to rearrange the Gospel by maintaining that "It is composed both generally and in detail with singular symmetry".<sup>(28)</sup> While he did not underestimate the influence of the Evangelist, Westcott believed that the material in the Fourth Gospel was likely to be historically valuable since this was demanded by the insistence that "The Word became flesh". There was, moreover, an element of interpretation in the Synoptics.<sup>(29)</sup> Like many, Westcott saw considerable influence of the Evangelist in the discourses; he gave the substance of these discourses faithfully to those in the new circumstances.

He argued that it was impossible to understand the Fourth Gospel without "The basis of the Old Testament, without the fullest acceptance of the unchanging divinity of the Old Testament."<sup>(30)</sup> There is no discussion of a non-Biblical background, though considerable use is made of Patristic commentaries in the exposition. There is symbolism in the Fourth Gospel; "...fact is interpreted by thought, and thought by fact."<sup>(31)</sup> Westcott noted an indebtedness to the Synoptics, though he stressed that



they do not provide a full account of the Ministry, and on occasions John adds details from his actual experience. There is a special link with Luke, but there is profundity in John's Gospel which takes us beyond the Synoptics, though John provides the link with them in the Apocalypse.<sup>(32)</sup> John also wrote the Epistles; "The first epistle pre-supposes the Gospel either as a writing, or as oral instruction"<sup>(33)</sup> though there are important differences; "The burden of the Epistles is 'the Christ is Jesus': the writer presses his argument from the divine to the human, from the spiritual and ideal to the historical. The burden of the Gospel is 'Jesus is the Christ': the writer presses his argument from the human to the divine, from the historical to the spiritual and ideal. The former is the natural position of the preacher, and the latter of the historian." He argued that this made sense of the difference in their respective eschatological teaching, but he was unable to find any satisfactory reason for the difference in the teaching on atonement or indeed why the language of the discourses in chapters 3 and 6 found no place in the epistles

There is a depth and a maturity in Westcott's commentary on the Greek text - something which he had intended to write from his undergraduate days, - and it anticipated some of the scholarship that we review. While it can be generally described as traditional and conservative, there is a willingness to see the influence of a later age and a Gentile culture. This flexibility was not to characterise many of the protagonists who defended positions resolutely. On the other hand, he was not always aware of problems in his own position; a good example is his not seriously considering the differences he had noted between the Gospel and the First Epistle.

The Re-affirmation of the Traditional View.

This re-affirmation is particularly associated with three scholars, Drummond, Sanday and V.H. Stanton. Our review will concentrate primarily on the work of Drummond. Writing in November, 1903 of his response to the clarion call to defend this traditional view, Sanday remarked, referring to the works of Drummond and Stanton, "The urgency was no longer so great";<sup>(34)</sup> indeed, he would have been content to have allowed the case to rest, particularly as it had been set forth by Drummond. Stanton came to change his mind; in part three of "The Gospels as Historical Documents", 1920, he no longer held to Apostolic authorship.<sup>(35)</sup> What is not so generally recognised is that he was moving towards this position in 1903. At the very end of part one he wrote:

"The evidence is, as we have shown, strong both for the work of the Apostle John in Asia in the last part of his life, and for his authorship of the Gospel. But the idea of actual authorship might almost imperceptibly have been substituted for a more indirect part in the work, that of a witness and teacher whose utterances have been embodied in it and had inspired it."<sup>(36)</sup>

At this stage, he was rightly held to be a champion of the traditional view.

Drummond was embarrassed by his own conclusions for they led him to reject the opinions of his two mentors, J.J. Tayler and J. Martineau.<sup>(37)</sup> Drummond's book is 513 pages long and is wide-ranging in scope. Having argued for a three-fold division of the Gospel,<sup>(38)</sup> Drummond continued by comparing the Gospel with the Synoptics. In this section, he covered familiar ground,<sup>(39)</sup> yet he did not accept the current 'orthodoxy' concerning their relationship, arguing that "The facts are, I think, sufficient, to establish what in itself is extremely probable, that the writer of our Gospel was acquainted with the Synoptic cycle of narratives, but cannot prove that he made use of our Gospels or of any one of them, though that

also is by no means destitute of probability,"<sup>(40)</sup> and that the Synoptic "Tradition must have been perfectly familiar many years before the Fourth Gospel was written and why the Apostle John should not occasionally drop into the well-known words, I cannot conceive. I see no evidence that the writer was obliged to depend upon the Synoptics for his language and materials."<sup>(41)</sup> While Drummond was unable to regard the speeches of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel as strictly historical, since he gave full weight to their distinctive character, he nonetheless noted sixty Synoptic-type sayings in the Fourth Gospel, though he was well aware that this discovery by itself does not prove very much.<sup>(42)</sup> The Fourth Evangelist did not write to supplement the Synoptics.

Drummond did not detect any polemical intent in the Fourth Gospel. Significantly he wrote, "The author writes out of the fullness of his own experience."<sup>(43)</sup> This struck a chord that was to become familiar very quickly; what is important here is that this view has been expressed by one who came to traditional conclusions. The Gospel was written to promote spiritual, rather than intellectual, faith, though an understanding of contemporary philosophy is of great service in enabling us to understand the work. This posed the question of the historical value of the Fourth Gospel. The Evangelist did not intend to provide a biography of Jesus. While he agreed that the portrait of Jesus could have been drawn by a friend, Drummond was concerned with the "Unhistorical character of the book"<sup>(44)</sup> but these unhistorical elements could not destroy the argument for Apostolic authorship since "John may therefore, have determined to write a life in which, disregarding the bodily things as already sufficiently provided for, he could set forth spiritually, what the Messiah and Son of God had become to him."<sup>(45)</sup> Thus he generally set a lower historical value on the Fourth Gospel than the Synoptics, "Believing with the earlier tradition, that it is to be accepted more in the spirit than in the letter."<sup>(46)</sup> In an argument which anticipated some modern understanding of the nature of

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Christian tradition,- an argument that Dodd would have welcomed, - Drummond argued that a late date for the Fourth Gospel does not alter the essential nature of the problem since "The very form of the tradition must have been sacred to the communities which based their life upon it; and most men would hesitate long before departing from it, and even if they wished to idealize, would bring their fresh narratives clearly within the accepted framework." (47)

In his sixty-six page discussion of the "General character of the Fourth Gospel", while he generally upheld the orthodox conservative position, Drummond did not accept all its conclusions. Three of these are significant for the later debate; the Johannine use of "The Jews", (48) the "Complete spiritualising of eschatology" (49) and a self-consciously ecclesiastical attitude." (50)

This was followed by a massive discussion of authorship; it is four hundred and forty pages long, aptly illustrating how crucial was the question of authorship to Johannine scholars at this time. In this he differed radically from Tayler, who, in 1867, put forward a theory very close to that of F.C. Baur that

"The entire Gospel is an unfolding of the dogmatic idea of the Logos...and that in subservience to this plan, the traditional material is treated without any regard to historical accuracy... It follows that this Gospel is not the work of an apostle... It presupposes the reconciliation of Jewish Christianity and Paulinism in the unity of the Catholic Church...Consequently it cannot be of earlier date than the second half of the second century." (51)

This extreme position, which was influential and anticipated some current thinking, was the context in which Drummond set to work. Within a long

review of the external evidence, some two hundred and seventy pages, Drummond differed from his other mentor in arguing that the Gospel and First Epistle were by the same author, the epistle being the later work.<sup>(52)</sup> He was impressed by the cumulative character of the external evidence that he reviewed so painstakingly. He drew two conclusions; "First the attestation is perfectly unanimous in favour of the early date of the Gospel, for in this, even the dubious Alogi, are supporters of the Catholic view"<sup>(53)</sup> and, secondly, "That the Apostle John was the author can hardly claim the same degree of confidence."<sup>(54)</sup>

Drummond reviewed the internal evidence in much the same way as Lightfoot, Sanday and Westcott; a dependence that he recognised. There is no need to repeat that treatment, and we will only comment on points of particular interest. He recognised that law and grace were antithetical in Paul as they were in John, and urged us to "Observe that the universalism, which is thought to be so anti-Judaic in this book, is distinctly Jewish in conception."<sup>(55)</sup> Whereas Tayler had seen many allusions to the great controversies of the second century, Drummond was impressed by their absence. He was suspicious of displacement theories, believing that the Evangelist "Cared more for association of thought than for the order of Chronology."<sup>(56)</sup> In an era when Hellenism and Judaism were so often thought of as distinct categories, he allowed for considerable inter-action between them. Indeed to some it must have appeared as though Drummond presented the Evangelist in markedly Hellenistic terms whereas in fact he concluded "I think we shall see that the book itself points to a Palestinian Jew who in later life was brought into some sort of loose contact with the current modes of thought among the Greeks."<sup>(57)</sup> He was not able to comprehend the strength of Martineau's comment that "No Israelite sharing the memory of the  $\lambda\alpha\omicron\varsigma$  could, like the evangelist, place himself superciliously outside his compatriots, speak of their most sacred anniversaries as 'feasts of the Jews', and reckon the Jews among the common  $\epsilon\theta\eta$  of

the world."(58)

While he admitted that certain difficulties remained, Drummond supported the traditional view of authorship. This was a notable defence of the traditional view by one who certainly could not have been accused of being biased in its favour; indeed his conclusions went against his earlier convictions.

Between 12th October and 4th November, 1903, Sanday delivered the Morse Lectures at Union Theological Seminary, New York. These lectures were not characterised by the same temperance that graced Drummond's work. He was indebted to Drummond and our review will be brief, not repeating areas which he shared with Drummond. Sanday rejected partition theories since he suspected "That the standard of consecutiveness applied is too often western and modern."(59) He was more sympathetic to Briggs' suggestion that the present order of the Gospel is due to a redactor who broke up a chronologically exact scheme to fit one dominated by subject matter. He argued that Clement of Alexandria had first put forward the correct solution to the Johannine problem; that the Gospel was the work of the Apostle John, at the end of his life when, with the Synoptic Gospels in front of him, he determined to write a spiritual Gospel. Thus where John differed from the Synoptics he did so deliberately, and this supports the picture of the Evangelist as one conscious of his authority, but strangely he argued that such alterations as the Evangelist made had no connection with his purpose in writing.(60) He was convinced that the Evangelist was an eyewitness(61) although there are passages, like the Cleansing of the Temple, "Where the writer not only throws himself back into the past, but also looks back upon the past in the light of his subsequent experience."(62) He was impressed by the Evangelist's knowledge of Palestine in the time of Jesus. Thus where John differs from the Synoptics it was because "To the best of his belief and knowledge the facts were really as he stated them, and

not otherwise.<sup>(63)</sup> Implicitly here is a preference for the Fourth Gospel rather than the Synoptics for a reconstruction of the Ministry of Jesus. This discussion was bedevilled by an unsatisfactory view of the Synoptics.<sup>(64)</sup> Sanday found no anachronism in the Fourth Gospel and was especially severe on those who made anything of the possibility of expulsion from the Synagogue.<sup>(65)</sup>

Sanday's discussion of the Logos doctrine was fuller than Drummond's. He knew of those who saw links between John and Philo at this point, but he preferred to find parallels in the Old Testament and quoted approvingly Harnack's epigrammatic saying that "Even the Logos has little more in common with that of Philo than the name, and its mention at the beginning of the book is a mystery, not the solution of one."<sup>(66)</sup> Nonetheless, like Drummond, he argued that the Apostle was influenced by Hellenistic speculation at Ephesus.<sup>(67)</sup>

In anticipation of modern scholarship, Sanday asserted that "The object of the Gospel would be called in modern technical language to exhibit a Christology."<sup>(68)</sup> There were links between the Christology of the Fourth Gospel and that of Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews. There were other theological similarities, but he attacked those who made John the chief of Paul's apostles.<sup>(69)</sup> In an image that was to become famous, he argued "As it is, the two great Apostolic cycles stand majestically apart. There may be a connection between them, but it is a connection in the main underground. There is no direct affiliation, but the parentage of both lies behind."<sup>(70)</sup> In this Sanday was surely correct. The whole critical debate was exacerbated by the fact that those who valued the Fourth Gospel valued tradition and the traditional supernaturalist understanding of Christianity, whereas those who found the epitome of Christianity in Paul tended to value tradition less highly, and were more willing to consider alternative understandings of the faith.

These three scholars, Drummond, Sanday and Stanton, represented

cautious, constructive, conservative British scholarship at its best and most confident in the early years of this century. The limitations of their work are now obvious, so too are the strengths, and maybe the weakest part of their whole discussion was the identification of authenticity and value with the traditional view of authorship. It is easy now to see how they could not dialogue with the 'modernists' whom they thought to be destroying traditional Christianity. More than the status of the Fourth Gospel was at stake.



E.F. Scott.

Within two years of the delivery of Sanday's Morse Lectures, E.F. Scott published "The Fourth Gospel, its Purpose and Theology". It was to have an immediate impact.<sup>(71)</sup> For the first time the typical continental solutions to the Johannine problem were accepted by a British scholar and made available to the British public. It was as though the work of the scholars whom we have just discussed had never taken place. On reading the book, one is immediately impressed by the author's flexible mind and his ability to make a number of penetrating judgements. Our discussion will be based mainly on Scott's own summary of his conclusions and those chapters in which he specifically considered the ecclesiastical and polemical aims of the Evangelist.

The Gospel "is a work of transition, in which primitive Christianity is carried over into a different world of thought",<sup>(72)</sup> from Jewish to Greek culture, in which revelation is now seen not in the world of outward fact, but in the world of inward experience, so that the Gospel "Is the expression (and if this is forgotten, we miss its ultimate secret) of profound personal religion."<sup>(73)</sup> John is indebted to various sources, among them the primitive Christian tradition, Paulinism and Alexandrian speculation. Scott thought that Paulinism was the most significant background, though he was not unaware of differences between John and Paul.<sup>(74)</sup> He argued that the theology of John may, in the main, be considered a development along Paulinist lines.<sup>(75)</sup> While he urged caution lest the influence of Alexandria be overvalued, it is a significant influence which may be seen in the use of the allegorical method, some links with Philo but above all in the Logos doctrine.<sup>(76)</sup> The Fourth Evangelist is concerned to serve the church, now established in the Gentile world, a full generation removed from the Apostles; "To maintain itself under altered conditions, it (the Church) was required to re-interpret its message in such a manner as to impress the larger world of Hellenic culture, while still maintaining its essential character."<sup>(77)</sup>

Scott maintained that the Evangelist stood at the confluence of two great streams of thought, the Hebraic and Hellenic, and that, though he had to some extent, been anticipated by Paul and Philo, "John represents the stage of thought at which Greek and Jewish beliefs had finally run together."<sup>(78)</sup> Here the classical Doddian thesis is anticipated.

Scott saw the Johannine endeavour made more urgent by controversies within and without the church; "There can be little doubt that the Gospel is largely controversial in character."<sup>(79)</sup> In this section he anticipated a great deal of modern scholarship, notably, perhaps, C.K. Barrett. Scott argued that the Evangelist has a double stance towards Judaism:

"The same writer, who so pointedly dissociates himself from the Jews, marks them as his special antagonists, appears at times to regard them with sympathy...How are we to explain this partiality for Judaism which appears side by side with the fierce polemic? It may be set down, in some measure, to the Evangelist's natural sympathy with his own race breaking through the religious antagonism...But, apart from racial sympathies, he cannot forget that the two religions, in spite of their present alienation, are historically related and have much in common. The defence of Christianity involved, up to a certain point, the defence of Judaism, with which it was still vaguely confused in the mind of the outside world."<sup>(80)</sup>

Scott continued by suggesting that what was of value in Judaism had passed over into the Church.<sup>(81)</sup> The Synagogue had responded by expelling the Christians, and the outside world was more impressed with the Jewish 'case' so that "John endeavours, therefore, to set the dispute upon a different footing, arguing that the church is the true Israel."<sup>(82)</sup> There is here a greater understanding of the historical situation of the Evangelist than had been shown by the conservative scholars.

Scott also saw a double stance towards Gnosticism. Having reviewed

the familiar evidence for John's alleged Gnosticism, he concluded that

"He perceives that the new movement, which was afterwards to result in various Gnostic systems, had its ground in a genuine religious need, and endeavours to arrive at some understanding with it.

The heresy would be most effectively overcome if the truth in it could be sifted out from the falsehood and allowed its due place in the established faith. Hence the peculiar relation, at once polemical and sympathetic, in which John appears to stand towards Gnosticism. He sees that it is fraught with danger, and reaffirms, with a special emphasis, those vital facts of Christianity which it threatened to set aside; but he is willing to borrow from it whatever seemed true and valuable in its teaching."<sup>(83)</sup>

These double stances are indications of a fundamental dialectic in John's thought, "Thus in every part of the Gospel we can discover two lines of thinking apparently brought together, but in reality parallel and distinct. The Evangelist is seeking to express ideas essentially religious under metaphysical categories which were in their nature inadequate to his purpose."<sup>(84)</sup> While the historical situation of the Evangelist was a major determining factor in the development of his theology, it would appear that the change of culture is at least as significant and implicitly here is the understanding of Christianity transforming Greek categories to some extent.

The Fourth Gospel is also very much an ecclesiastical book, partly concerned to repel the criticisms of hostile sects,<sup>(85)</sup> but it is also very concerned with internal Church problems. The major problem confronting the Church was that the initial enthusiasm had evaporated in that there was no reception of the immediate power of the Holy Spirit so that "From this time onward the Church becomes authoritative instead of the Living Spirit,"<sup>(86)</sup> This is one of the marks of what is now frequently called 'Primitive Catholicism'. Scott asserted that "The Fourth Gospel. has come to us out of this age in which the Church has

become a dominant feature in Christian theology."<sup>(87)</sup> The situation was aggravated by an "Extravagant value set on the sacraments."<sup>(88)</sup> Scott argued that "It is one of the main purposes of the Gospel to legislate for this new community."<sup>(89)</sup> The Evangelist provided a theology which gave an adequate and authoritative expression to the common faith, seen most clearly in his teaching on the sacraments and in his references to Church government and order. This accounts for some of the tensions in John's position as may be clearly seen in chapter six where, in his loyalty to orthodoxy, and attacks upon mechanical observance, he reasserted the great facts upon which the significance of the sacraments depend.<sup>(90)</sup>

In this complete re-statement of Christian doctrine in Hellenistic terms, the importance of the Logos doctrine cannot be overestimated,<sup>(91)</sup> and it illustrates the way in which Greek terms were substituted for the actual words of Jesus. There are four specific consequences:

Firstly, there is an alliance with Hellenistic culture,

Secondly, it is possible to assert the universal character of the work of Christ so that;

Thirdly, Christianity can be described as the absolute religion, and finally, "John was able to assign to Jesus his central place as not only the founder, but in His own person the object, of Christianity."<sup>(92)</sup>

There were drawbacks; for example, he suggested that John, while apparently enhancing the portrait of Jesus by introducing certain metaphysical attributes, not only did violence to historical fact, but he also lost the moral attributes of trust, pity, forgiveness and sympathy. Scott felt this acutely, "The permanent value of the Gospel does not depend, therefore, on its adaptation of the Logos doctrine to the facts of Christianity, but is to be sought apart from that doctrine, one may say, almost in spite of it."<sup>(93)</sup>

Scott concluded that "The Gospel, on a last analysis, is the personal

testimony of a profound religious spirit, expressing, in the language of a given time, the truths which must ever be vital to the Christian faith."<sup>(94)</sup> He contended vigorously that this did not destroy the value of the Fourth Gospel; "The Fourth Gospel loses nothing of its abiding value when we cease to regard it as an abstract meditation and endeavour to relate it to its own particular time. It becomes, on the contrary, a living book and makes a closer and more intelligible appeal to us."<sup>(95)</sup>

Thus authenticity and value are now detached from the questions of authorship and historicity and the quest for meaning is placed in a specific context. Scott accepted the existence of the tensions and inconsistencies in terms of the Evangelist's loyalty to traditional orthodoxy and his openness to the needs of a specific ecclesiastical situation. While his acute regret about the loss of the Gospel's contact with historical fact showed a typical British concern, here was presented to Britain a 'New look' on the Fourth Gospel, though it was commonplace on the Continent.

### The Continuing Debate.

It was this debate that reminded Dodd of trench warfare. Scott's "The Fourth Gospel: its purpose and theology" began a movement in which it appeared that the traditional conservative opinion would be rendered untenable. In 1906 F.C. Burkitt published "The Gospel history and its transmission" in which he epitomised Scott's position.<sup>(96)</sup> In "Essays on some Biblical questions of the day", 1909, W.R. Inge was confident that "the question of authorship is now considered secondary to the question of the character of the book."<sup>(97)</sup> He was simply overstating the case for almost all of A.S. Peake's discussion of the Fourth Gospel in his "A critical introduction to the New Testament", 1909, was concerned with authorship. Howard thought this a masterly summary of the debate; with a few reservations Peake came down on the conservative side. Inge argued that the question of the value of the Gospel as an authority for the teaching of Jesus was in fact the theological question of the relationship of the glorified Christ or Holy Spirit to the Church.<sup>(98)</sup> Inge outlined the same polemical targets as Scott, going appreciably beyond him with the assertion that "Nothing remains of Judaism in this Gospel; Johannine Christianity strips it absolutely bare."<sup>(99)</sup> He argued that, while the Gospel is not a philosophical treatise, it rests on a philosophy of life in which there are three dominant strands - idealism, mysticism and symbolism.<sup>(100)</sup> R.H. Strachan was similarly indebted to Scott. This may be seen most clearly in his "The Fourth Evangelist: dramatist or historian?" where the title sets forth an antithesis. Strachan maintained that there was historical material in the Fourth Gospel, even in the discourses, though much depends upon a definition of "history". All that Strachan appeared to require was "The assurance brought by the Fourth Evangelist's work that the Christ of Paul and of the Christian faith is congruous with belief in an historic personality."<sup>(101)</sup> This was much less than the conservative

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scholars meant, but it illustrates the persistent British desire not to let go completely of the historical even though for Strachan "The Fourth Gospel is pre-eminently the Gospel of Christian experience."<sup>(102)</sup> The dominance of the 'modern' stance may easily be seen in Moffatt's "An introduction to the literature of the New Testament", 1911, where he outlined the background to Johannine thought in terms of the Old Testament, Paulinism, Jewish Alexandrian philosophy and Stoicism. Moffatt argued that "The dominant feature of any gospel is its conception of Jesus, and the Fourth Gospel is a study of the interpretation of his life, written in order to bring out his present significance as the Logos-Christ for faith. The evangelist does not find Jesus in the Logos; he finds the Logos in the Jesus of the Church, and the starting point of his work is a deep religious experience of Jesus as the revelation of the Father."<sup>(103)</sup> He too, felt that there were deficiencies in the Johannine picture; his regrets were identical with Scott's. Moffatt agreed that John knew and used the Synoptics.

Some who accepted this 'modern' stance refused to go all the way with it. Inge would not allow that John was a complete allegorist<sup>(104)</sup> while Moffatt realised that there was theology in the Synoptics and that one must not play them off against the Fourth Gospel, "In a series of rigid antitheses."<sup>(105)</sup>

Moffatt appeared to show some awareness of the work of A.E. Brooke in the same Cambridge volume as Inge's essay. Brooke sought to reopen the question of the historical value of the Fourth Gospel. In this discriminating essay Brooke rebuked those who loved polarising tendencies.<sup>(106)</sup> Furthermore, Brooke was no rabid conservative; he noted and conceded most of the difficulties,<sup>(107)</sup> but he went on to suggest that we must "Face the fact that we have not two complete and satisfying pictures. The Fourth Gospel would not have been written if men had been satisfied that the portrait was fully and completely drawn in

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the pages of the Synoptists."<sup>(108)</sup> He criticised the method of crude comparison, remarking that "There is something of interpretation even in Saint Mark."<sup>(109)</sup> This was a notable statement, for so many thought that a departure from Mark was a departure from fact. He proposed an alternative method; "The historical value of the Gospel may fairly be tested by the amount of help to be obtained from it in explaining the course of events, in general outline, or in detailed incident, which is presented to us in the Synoptic account. Does the Fourth Gospel help us to a truer conception of the history?"<sup>(110)</sup> This was the course that Dodd followed in 1921 in "The close of the Galilaean Ministry." Brooke went on to cite examples where this was possible and, in a judicious discussion, examined passages which allegedly told against the historicity of the Johannine narrative, he demonstrated that the case against the historicity of the Johannine narrative was not proved. In the course of this discussion he noted the growing consensus among Jewish scholars "That of all the Gospels the Fourth is the one which shows most intimate acquaintance with Jewish thought and especially with the ideas of Rabbinic Judaism."<sup>(111)</sup> He referred to a paper by I. Abrahams to the Cambridge Theological Society in which certain features of the Marcan narrative were criticised for their lack of historicity. This was a 'body blow' to the 'modern' position, but worse was to come, for Abrahams asserted "Most remarkable of all has been the cumulative strengths of the arguments adduced by Jewish writers favourable to the authenticity of the discourses in the Fourth Gospel, especially in relation to the circumstances under which they are reported to have been spoken."<sup>(112)</sup>

Brooke pleaded for a "Modification of the present tendency to ignore the historical value of the Fourth Gospel for the reconstruction of the history of the Ministry."<sup>(113)</sup> He was enthusiastic about the possibility of maintaining a satisfactory distinction between the Grundschrift and later interpolations,<sup>(114)</sup> though he warned against



those who demanded a "Rigid consistency and sequence of thought and language which is very far from the method of the Fourth Evangelist."<sup>(115)</sup> Brooke concluded this essay with a paragraph that questioned the value of the obsession with Paulinism and asked about the possibility of independent sources behind the Fourth Gospel; "The time will come for gathering up the fragments of the Fourth Gospel which are of historical value for the story of the Ministry of Jesus Christ in Palestine and His teaching during His earthly life. And when it comes, our own or a later generation may find that the broken pieces which remain are neither so few nor so fragmentary as the literature of the last few years has led us to suppose."<sup>(116)</sup> In 1919, in his article in "A commentary on the Bible", edited by A.S. Peake, Brooke argued that there were indeed independent sources behind the Fourth Gospel; "If there is interpretation there is history as well, and the history is not derived from the Synoptic accounts. It is often needed to explain them."<sup>(117)</sup>

This was a significant essay which did as much as anything in these years to promote the search for the historical element in the Fourth Gospel. It also halted a headlong rush to the 'modern' position. In fact the inclusion of these three essays, by Abrahams, Brooke and Inge, in the same volume, showed how fluid the situation in Johannine scholarship was. More evidence is provided by those who changed their mind. Another Cambridge scholar, H.L. Jackson, published "The Fourth Gospel and some recent criticism" in 1906. When asked for a revision, he was unable to comply with the request; "The Problem of the Fourth Gospel", 1918, is a new book. In the preface he warned his readers that he turned to his earlier book "With added dissatisfaction and no small measure of dissent."<sup>(118)</sup> No options were totally closed by 1924 when B.H. Streeter published "The Four Gospels, a study of origins", in which he maintained that the author was a mystic and that the Fourth Gospel properly belonged to the library of devotion. He urged his readers to remember that "The author of the Fourth Gospel stands

between two worlds, the Hebrew and the Greek, at the confluence of the two greatest spiritual and intellectual traditions of our race. In him, Plato and Isaiah meet."<sup>(119)</sup>

British scholarship generally agreed that the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle were by the same hand; Peake suggested that "It is hyper-criticism to deny the identity of authorship."<sup>(120)</sup> For many the work of A.E. Brooke and R.H. Charles in their respective volumes in "The International Critical Commentary" series had demonstrated this identity beyond doubt<sup>(121)</sup> An exception was Moffatt, who accepted the tradition of the early martyrdom of John Zebedee; he suggested a Johannine school - a concept which Streeter ridiculed as 'nebulous' - and argued that "The writer of 'First John' had, in all likelihood, some share in the editorial process through which the Fourth Gospel reached its final form, but the extent of this share is still uncertain."<sup>(122)</sup>

Old Testament scholarship had enjoyed considerable success in discovering editorial processes and sources. This success affected New Testament scholars.<sup>(123)</sup> J. McClymont in "The Century Bible" wrote of the Fourth Gospel's 'unity and symmetry' and went on to suggest that "It is scarcely too much to say that the theory of two-fold authorship would never have been suggested but for an aversion to the theological contents of the book, and the desire to deprive it of the authority attaching to it as a work of the Apostle John."<sup>(124)</sup> Many would have agreed with Strauss that the Fourth Gospel is like a seamless coat, though some had reservations about chapter 21 and the pericope de adultera. The alternative position was epitomised in Bacon's famous rejoinder that "The seamless coat had also a warp and a woof and a tasselled fringe."<sup>(125)</sup> Contrary to McClymont's suggestion, much of this analytical criticism was motivated by a desire to save as much material for John as possible.<sup>(126)</sup> Many scholars, who made concessions over chapter 21 and the pericope de adultera, never faced

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the implications of these concessions. Howard outlined a good number of "Theories of partition and redaction" in Appendix C where the majority of scholars whose work is considered, are continental.<sup>(127)</sup> Much English-speaking scholarship was thoroughly unsympathetic to such approaches. Howard urged caution in these areas by outlining three fallacies; - those of analogy with Old Testament criticism, anachronism - by which he meant the assumption that John must have been governed by our ideas of consistency - and subjectivity.<sup>(128)</sup> Moffatt, who was generally sympathetic to this approach, concluded "We still lack a sure clue to any process of extensive editing."<sup>(129)</sup> Many of the theories were at utter variance with each other and the recantation of Strachan is interesting, if not totally significant.<sup>(130)</sup>

We turn now to a brief consideration of theories of textual displacement, which were more generously received by British scholars. Many, such as Streeter, accepted such textual displacements as inevitable.<sup>(131)</sup> The publication of Moffatt's "New translation of the New Testament", 1913, was significant in that it brought the whole question into common view.<sup>(132)</sup> The many starting points of such theories, the many explanations, including involved mathematical calculations, and indeed the large measure of agreement among those who do not think that the present order reflects the intention of the Evangelist may be seen in Howard's Appendix D and his discussion in pages 125-42. While many scholars were not sceptical about this procedure, Howard's second and third fallacies, outlined above, remain cautions. While both significant commentaries in this period, Bernard and Macgregor, offered considerable rearrangements, two of Howard's three questions need to be asked: "Do these discontinuities in narrative or discourse point to some primitive dislocation of the text, and is this suspicion supported by any objective test?" and, "Is there any other probable explanation of the manifestly disordered state of the text?"<sup>(133)</sup> As we have seen, not all scholars accepted that the text was "Manifestly disordered". In the event more significant questions were awaiting consideration.

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Since the beginning of the century the history-of-religions approach to the Fourth Gospel had been added to the scholar's tools. In Britain, mainly through the work of Kirsopp Lake, these ideas first became known in Pauline scholarship. This approach widened the discussion of the Hellenistic background to include the consideration of a culture that was far removed from that of classical Greece, and indeed open to influences from the East. Since Bultmann published two significant essays - "Der religionsgeschichtliche Hintergrund des Prologs zum Johannes-Evangelium", 1923 and "Die Bedeutung der neuerschlossenen mandäischen und manichäischen Quellen für das Verständnis des Johannesevangeliums", 1925<sup>(134)</sup> Johannine studies have had to face the 'Mandean problem'.<sup>(135)</sup> In the period under review English-speaking scholarship reacted with little patience and sympathy to this approach. In the second edition of W. Bauer's commentary, 1925, many parallels with Mandean literature were drawn. Schnackenburg incorrectly argued that Dodd was the first English scholar to consider the problems of comparative religion as they affect the Fourth Gospel.<sup>(136)</sup> Bernard enjoyed considerable expertise in this field; he knew of many of the alleged parallels and rejected them. Burkitt attempted to show that the Mandean documents are dependent on Christian sources.<sup>(137)</sup>

There was also an upsurge of interest in possible points of contact between the Hermetica and the Fourth Gospel; these will be discussed when Dodd's major works are reviewed. Similarly, there was a discussion about the nature of Gnosticism and its influence on the Fourth Gospel. The tendency was to think of a 'pre-gnosticism' which had infiltrated Judaism, Hellenistic paganism and Christianity and by which John had been influenced.<sup>(138)</sup> This approach was supported by Odeberg's work. Howard welcomed this study; "The title ('The Fourth Gospel Interpreted in its Relation to Contemporaneous Religious Currents') indicates the angle of approach...The value of this instalment of a very learned work is in the marshalling of a mass of evidence to show that in the comparative study of religious ideas the Fourth Gospel will receive light, less in the milieu of the Western World of Hellenism than in an oriental environment."<sup>(139)</sup>

G.H.C. Macgregor.

It was against this background that Macgregor published his avowedly 'modern' commentary in 1928. In 1930, consciously in dialogue with Bernard, he published "The Fourth Gospel. The background of Christian experience."<sup>(140)</sup> Where Macgregor's conclusions are identical to those of Scott no discussion will be offered.<sup>(141)</sup> He suggested that the Evangelist knew the Synoptics, though not necessarily writing with them open before him; "All (his sources have) been fused in the crucible of his creative imagination."<sup>(142)</sup> He offered the typical comparison with the Synoptics, noting particularly a good deal of drama in the Gospel, but he was concerned not to overplay this contrast and spoke of "A substratum of authentic history."<sup>(143)</sup> following many in preferring the Johannine dating of the Crucifixion. But to overstate the historical, as he believed Bernard had done, was to misunderstand the purpose of the Gospel; "The Gospel shows us Jesus as His Church had experienced Him."<sup>(144)</sup> He wrote of the Johannine Christ who speaks from the corporate experience of the Church.<sup>(145)</sup> In both the article and the commentary, Macgregor cited Von Hügel with approval, maintaining that it is impossible to understand the Fourth Gospel without an appreciation of the part played by symbolism,<sup>(146)</sup> but Macgregor was not prepared to let go of the historical. He was pulled in both directions, citing Bacon and Von Hügel with approval,<sup>(147)</sup> yet claiming that "Generally speaking, it is likely that he believed in his facts and recorded little that he did not suppose to be historical, even though his belief may not always have been justified."<sup>(148)</sup> Whatever caveats British scholars attached to the historical in the Fourth Gospel, Macgregor is a good example of one who, to use Dodd's words, could not understand why German scholars "Had ever coined the word 'Historismus' as a term of reproach."<sup>(149)</sup>

Arguing that all the New Testament books originated in the needs of the early Church, Macgregor saw in the Fourth Gospel both an interpretative and polemical aim. In the whole of this he followed a well-worn path<sup>(150)</sup> arguing that it was this interpretation that enabled the Church to avoid the peril of "Either evaporating as a philosophy or petrifying as mechanical tradition."<sup>(151)</sup> There were differences between Scott and Macgregor; for example, whereas Scott had seen something of John's loyalty to tradition, Macgregor roundly declared "Milestones these on the way of the Church's progressive search for truth."<sup>(152)</sup> Many pre-suppositions are concealed behind such a statement. Macgregor saw the major polemic against contemporary Judaism<sup>(153)</sup> though there may be a secondary polemic against the disciples of John the Baptist. He also considered the purpose of the Fourth Gospel in terms of mission; like Paul, John sometimes uses phrases borrowed from the mystery religions, though Macgregor was unhappy here qualifying the idea immediately by "If indeed, he does more than use imagery which is the common property of all mystics."<sup>(154)</sup> Though he agreed with Scott that the Fourth Gospel had a double stance towards Gnosticism, Macgregor concluded that "John with studied insistence repudiates its more glaring errors."<sup>(155)</sup> Within the commentary there is no discussion of the areas opened up by the history-of-religions approach.<sup>(156)</sup>

Any discussion of Macgregor's source analysis is inevitably unsatisfactory because of his subsequent change of mind, which cannot be considered here. In the commentary he held "The truth is that the Gospel impresses us, as few books do, by its unity"<sup>(157)</sup> and concluded that "Detailed analysis of the Gospel into several supposed strata is therefore ruled out."<sup>(158)</sup> In his much later work, "The Structure of the Fourth Gospel", 1961, despite his initial scepticism he collaborated with A.Q. Morton in distinguishing between J1 and J2. This has found little support among scholars.

Macgregor described himself as a 'Revisionist', one who explains the discrepancies and dislocations in terms of a later redactor's hand. That he was a considerable 'revisionist' may easily be seen in Howard's reconstruction of his theory in Appendix D<sup>(159)</sup> Macgregor argued that most of the discrepancies and dislocations echo the viewpoint of chapter 21. He saw three persons involved in the composition of the Fourth Gospel in its present form. There is a young Jerusalemite, not one of the Twelve, but admitted to their company in the closing days, who is the anonymous eye-witness -like many, Macgregor noted a considerable geographical knowledge and Jewish influence in John's Greek -but the Evangelist is John the Elder of Ephesus, who is also a Jew. This contemporary and disciple of the anonymous Beloved Disciple wrote the Gospel for the mainly Hellenistic Church. The third hand is that of the redactor who encouraged the tendency to identify the Evangelist with the Beloved Disciple and him with John, son of Zebedee.<sup>(160)</sup>

At the end of his sixty-nine page introduction, twenty-nine of which were devoted to the question of authorship, Macgregor wondered "Have we not been apt to overestimate the question of the Gospel's authorship?"<sup>(161)</sup> It was a question that demanded an affirmative answer; "The mere question of authorship still looms too large...If the value of the Gospel (be it historical or religious) be great in itself, then it matters little who wrote it; if small, we can make it no greater by postulating apostolic origin."<sup>(162)</sup> This was a counter to Bernard's position that there was apostolic eye-witness behind the Gospel. Macgregor compared Bernard's understanding to a photograph; "The whole picture is projected as a near-focussed photographic foreground and the background is blurred out."<sup>(163)</sup> Yet Macgregor himself could not let go of the conviction that behind the Fourth Gospel was the eye-witness testimony of one acquainted with the Twelve. British scholarship was still very concerned with the question of authorship and generally valued the Gospel highly if it found an apostolic origin. In his severe criticism of Bernard, who, as he

understood him, offered a strict alternative "Is the Gospel history based on authentic tradition or theology built on a spiritual experience?"<sup>(164)</sup> Macgregor offered a solution that has come to be associated with Dodd. Writing of the Gospel's contribution to theology, he described it as "An exposition of a mature theology in which history and experience have been fused into a higher and eternal synthesis."<sup>(165)</sup>

J.H. Bernard.

Bernard's commentary, published posthumously in 1928, was eagerly awaited. There seems to have been a feeling that much recent Johannine scholarship was of an ephemeral nature and that it had failed to discuss the essential issues. For example, Hoskyns complained that "During the whole period from the publication of Westcott's commentary on St. John's Gospel to the present day, only two considerable books on the Fourth Gospel have been produced for English readers."<sup>(166)</sup> The other volume was J. Estlin Carpenter's "The Johannine writings: a study of the Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel", 1927. Yet critical opinion was not really satisfied with Bernard's massive work. Hoskyns, in a review of Johannine scholarship that included Bernard's work, maintained that "Westcott's commentary is still the classical English commentary."<sup>(167)</sup> This reception owed something to the nature of Bernard's work and something to the defensive nature of traditional British scholarship at this period. V. Taylor wrote of a 'landslide' from the position of Lightfoot, yet he was rightly chided by G.H. Tremenhoe who suggested that "He might, with greater truth, have ascribed such 'landslide' to the position of Baur."<sup>(168)</sup>

The long introduction to the commentary began with the textual question; it is generally allowed that Bernard made adequate use of the discovery of new manuscripts. Like others he considered the problems of the order of the Gospel; he, too, offered a solution in terms of a rearranged manuscript, non-Johannine glosses and comments from the Evangelist.<sup>(169)</sup> Once the correct order has been 'restored', Bernard proposed a three-fold division of the Gospel.<sup>(170)</sup>



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Bernard agreed that the problem of authorship had been valued too highly,<sup>(171)</sup> yet many turned to his solution which satisfied neither 'modernist' nor 'traditionalist'. He argued that John, son of Zebedee is the Beloved Disciple. In his discussion he was especially severe on those who thought that the Beloved Disciple was an ideal figure,<sup>(172)</sup> there being no convincing support from the Gospel for this suggestion. He accepted the tradition that John the Apostle died in old age in Ephesus; thus he rejected the theory of the early martyrdom of John.<sup>(173)</sup> Bernard was impressed by the strength of the second century tradition, but he was not consistent in his use of tradition, for he argued for the existence of a second John at Ephesus, and this is supported by Papias alone.<sup>(174)</sup> He observed that "No writer for a hundred years after Papias seems to have supported the tradition that more than one John had to be reckoned with."<sup>(175)</sup> There is little justification for this inconsistent use of tradition. Bernard concluded that the Gospel and the Johannine Epistles were written by John Presbyter, the First Epistle, with its polemic against Gnosticism, a little later than the Gospel, with its controversies with Judaism. The Apocalypse was in all probability written by the Apostle.<sup>(176)</sup>

The extent of Bernard's abandonment of the traditional theory of authorship was discussed at length. For most of his information the Evangelist is dependent upon the testimony of John, son of Zebedee. Moreover, Bernard was not at all consistent in his description of the Presbyter, sometimes suggesting a very second-hand relationship to his material, and at others, involvement in the events themselves.<sup>(177)</sup> Further, the theory implies that not only did John, son of Zebedee, survive to a great old age, having reached Ephesus, but also that two other disciples accompanied him there and outlived him.<sup>(178)</sup> The result is to under-gird the historical value of the Gospel; "Not only the witness from whom the Evangelist derived much of his material, but the Evangelist himself, had special knowledge of Palestine during the

ministry of Jesus."<sup>(179)</sup> The result is that John, son of Zebedee, is still so responsible for the Gospel that the strict historicity of the whole is hardly affected by the Evangelist who had himself heard Jesus speak and was one of the first disciples, though not of the inner circle.

As we shall see, Dodd, who did not accept Bernard's solution, was convinced of the significance of any move by so cautious a scholar, arguing that it was "A definite victory of criticism over tradition in one of its most strongly entrenched positions."<sup>(180)</sup> Hoskyns probed the implications of the distinction between 'witness' and 'evangelist' claiming that it was fundamental to the commentary as a whole. Hoskyns was more aware of these implications than Bernard; he was, in fact, beginning to establish the position he was to present in his own commentary. For Hoskyns this distinction meant that "The Gospel is history and interpretation, not history interpreted, but history and (italicized) interpretation....The weakness of the commentary is that it introduces into a Gospel which is all of one piece a distinction which destroys the unity of both the whole and of each section."<sup>(181)</sup> This was all part of Hoskyns's claim that a generation of scholars had been so obsessed by the problem of historicity that they never faced the problem of history and its meaning.<sup>(182)</sup> It was this concern for historicity that forced Bernard to conclude that the Gospel had suffered dislocation, a point seized on by Hoskyns's.<sup>(183)</sup> He offered an alternative approach; "The truth would seem to be that throughout the Gospel the interpretation, which is complete and all embracing, has taken charge of the other material, and the question must be raised as to whether the purpose of the book is at all to provide a chronology of events or to add interpretation at certain points in the narrative or whether the word 'gloss' is in any sense adequate to describe the procedure of the Evangelist. It looks as though the purpose of the Evangelist was to illustrate and expound, great themes fundamental to the understanding of the Christian Religion and the Gospel is wholly exposition."<sup>(184)</sup>

That there are weaknesses in Bernard's position is clear, but these would be better expressed in Macgregor's comment than in Hoskyns' a lengthy elaboration of his own insight. Macgregor complained of the exposition being "Obsessed by the shadow of Apostolic eye-witness...so that the strict historicity of the record is hardly affected."<sup>(185)</sup> Hoskyns quite simply was inaccurate in his assessment of Bernard who insisted that the Evangelist is "Not only a historian but an interpreter of history."<sup>(186)</sup>

Bernard's position cannot be understood outside the controversy of the period occasioned by von Hügel's description of the Gospel as 'Allegory' and his assertion that the Gospel's truth depends "on the truth of the ideas thus symbolised."<sup>(187)</sup> Bernard demanded a careful definition of 'Allegory' but ultimately he came to use it in one sense, and the majority of scholars in another. Thus, while Dodd could affirm that "Dr. Bernard will not have it that the Evangelist is an allegorist,"<sup>(188)</sup> Bernard in fact asserted that the Evangelist was an allegorist in the Jewish Christian tradition, one who saw a deeper meaning within the literal or factual.<sup>(189)</sup> Bernard's discussion is unsatisfactory, for not only does he not seem aware of the radical difference in these understandings of allegory - such a difference that the same word will not do justice to the concepts - but he seems, on occasions, to use 'Parable' as a synonym for 'Allegory'. In the last analysis there is no mistaking the importance that Bernard put on the historical trustworthiness of the Gospel; "It was written that his readers might accept as facts, and not only as symbols, the incidents which he records."<sup>(190)</sup>

Even here, Bernard's position is far from consistent. In "The idea of 'Witness' is prominent", he wrote of the value of the witness of the works of Jesus.<sup>(191)</sup> He had a very odd quasi-rationalising stance to the miraculous for one who wanted to stress their value as witness. He wanted to preserve the historicity of these happenings at all costs in an age of scepticism and rationalism. For example, he suggested that the 'Master of Ceremonies' at Cana of Galilee might have been led by the

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magnetism of Jesus to think that he was drinking wine! Quite apart from the fact that this explanation has been rightly described by Dodd as "Providing first-aid to the incredulous"<sup>(192)</sup> what value would this 'miracle' have as 'witness'? Dodd's point remains; "But is it not really more consonant with the religious intention of the Gospel to suppose that if Jesus did not conjure water into wine neither did he hypnotise people into thinking he had done so; but that he did, and does, offer rich wine of a satisfying communion with God."<sup>(193)</sup> Yet alongside this went an acknowledgement that the Resurrection of Jesus implied the principle of the miraculous. Bernard concluded his section on the 'miraculous' with the warning "But he is a bold dogmatist who, in the present conditions of our knowledge, will venture to set any precise limits to the exercise of spiritual force even by ordinary human beings, still less when he who sets it in action has all the potentialities of the spiritual world at his command."<sup>(194)</sup> Yet within the body of the commentary a 'minimising attitude' is adopted.<sup>(195)</sup> It is difficult to see precisely where Bernard stood; instinctively for the historicity of the narratives described yet he did not appear to know how to stand in this age of scepticism and rationalism.

Bernard argued that most of the discourses could have been given by Jesus in his historical Ministry, although parts of them must be attributed to the reflections of the Evangelist. In this understanding Bernard was almost out on his own. He was roundly criticised by Dodd who argued that Bernard's approach and concession hindered "The full appreciation of them as the expression of a consistent and massive theology in which history and experience are fused."<sup>(196)</sup>

Bernard maintained a distinction between the discourses in part one, which were addressed to sincere enquirers, and those in part two which are polemical in tone, reflecting the controversies between Jesus and the religious authorities, although he suspected considerable contribution from the Evangelist here.<sup>(197)</sup> The same hand may be detected in the

Farewell Discourses, yet essentially the teaching is that of "The Master Himself, whose last words had been preserved in the memory of the Beloved Disciple, the last of the Apostles." (198)

Bernard is not always convincing. His position demands a more thorough-going criticism of the Gospel. At times it is impossible to detect the reflections of the Evangelist while at others it is comparatively easy. For example, it is assumed in the commentary that chapter four contains a "Genuine reminiscence of what actually happened" but of the final confession of the Samaritans it is stated "This great title reflects the conviction of a later moment in Christian history, and of a more fully instructed faith" (199) The words *ὁδὸς καὶ* "Cannot be extruded from the text of John, but they are not regarded as representing precisely the saying of Jesus. They are due to a restatement by John of the original saying of Jesus of v.3, and are a gloss, added to bring the saying of Jesus into harmony with the belief and practice of a later generation." (200) Bernard was unable to provide an analysis that would do justice to both the theological and historical elements of the Gospel. Throughout his critical discussion, Bernard appears to want to be more conservative than the critical climate would allow a conscientious scholar to be. It is also probable that his understanding of the purpose of the Gospel dominates this discussion. Bernard argued that the Gospel was written at the end of the first century when, in Asia Minor, the claims of Christianity would come under keen scrutiny. The Evangelist wrote to give these scrutineers the evidence by which they might become believers. This evidence consisted primarily of an historical account of the life and teaching of Jesus and it was precisely this that Bernard strove to preserve in the Fourth Gospel.

Maybe it was because of this understanding of the purpose of the Fourth Gospel that Bernard found so few parallels to Johannine thought in the religions of the Hellenistic world. Hoskyns applauded this; "The reader of this commentary is never overwhelmed by undisciplined catenas of

irrelevant parallels from the sphere of comparative religion. The references are primarily Biblical references, with which are combined references to the Apostolic Fathers and Irenaeus."<sup>(201)</sup> Dodd severely criticised him at this point.<sup>(202)</sup> In finding Patristic parallels, Bernard was reflecting a particular feature of traditional British Johannine scholarship. In his refusal to find parallels in the Hellenistic religious world Bernard was not perverse; he was no stranger to that world, for in 1913 he had published an edition of "The Odes of Solomon"<sup>(203)</sup> In the commentary he noted the work of Bauer, Lidzbarski and Reitzenstein. He rejected the possible parallels.

This brief review of Bernard may end with his understanding of the task of the interpreter of the Fourth Gospel. All the difficult, critical and historical problems are "Subsidiary to the exposition of the sacred text itself. This is at once more important and more difficult....The expositor's task is specially difficult, if he tries to place himself in the position of those who read the Gospel when it was first published. Its appeal to the twentieth century cannot be unfolded until the lesser task has been in some measure accomplished, of setting forth its appeal to the second century. Before we venture to appraise the permanent value of the writer's teaching, we must first discover what he meant to say. And this discovery is sometimes disconcerting, perhaps because the author moves in spiritual regions of thought too high for us, perhaps because his convictions are unwelcome to the scientific temper of our time."<sup>(204)</sup> This view anticipated that of Dodd whose understanding was identical; "The ideal interpreter would be one who has entered into that strange first century world, has felt its strangeness, and sojourned in it until he has lived himself into it, thinking and feeling as one of those to whom the Gospel first came, and who will then return into our world and give to the truth that he has discerned a body out of the stuff of our own thought."<sup>(205)</sup>

Whatever criticisms major scholars may have had about Bernard's

commentary, it made a significant impact on the Johannine scene. Henceforth it would be impossible to write a commentary in English without considerable reference to it. It was possible to do so without referring to Macgregor's commentary.<sup>(206)</sup> This affords some indication of their respective value as works of scholarship, though there is no doubt that Macgregor's work reflected the dominant stance of the period.

### Summary.

In his review, Hoskyns drew a contrast between the work of Bernard and of J. Estlin Carpenter, whose work to a great extent reflected that of E.F. Scott. No attempt to summarise his position will be made here. Hoskyns noted an approach unlike Bernard's so that he could make an important point; "The complete disagreement between these two scholars brings into clear prominence the uncertainty of the treatment of the Johannine writings which the older generation has left us a heritage."<sup>(207)</sup> Is there an adequate explanation for this state of affairs? Hoskyns is partly correct in asserting that "To the majority of continental theologians English Biblical work appeared learned, it is true, but nevertheless insular, provincial, traditional and apologetic."<sup>(208)</sup> It is equally true that the work of these critical continental scholars was suspect, and this suspicion was aggravated by the picture of the origins of Christianity that was emerging from their studies. Yet English scholars were not immune to the effects of this work. Hoskyns correctly asserted that "English works of the last generation must remain unintelligible unless it is recognised that the majority of educated Englishmen...felt there was something wrong with the critical movement. This sense of dissatisfaction was wholly shared by leading English theologians. Nevertheless they refused to regard the critical method itself as open to suspicion, for they were themselves working with its tools, and were themselves engaged in training Englishmen to use them."<sup>(209)</sup> Even if Hoskyns was only partly correct in arguing that

"Lightfoot, Sanday, Stanton, then Alfred Plummer, and finally

Archbishop Bernard followed the path which the liberal and radical

critics had mapped out, and at each critical point they stood on the defensive, having apparently assumed that the Truth, the ultimate theological Truth, concerning Jesus of Nazareth, was an observable analysable thing, which was capable of direct historical perception by believers and unbelievers alike, and that the observability of the Truth was indeed the meaning of the Church's doctrine of the Incarnation since it meant that history and theology were in the end identical factors,"(210)

there is no doubt that traditional scholarship at the beginning of the century was confident whereas some twenty years later it was on the defensive. The position was made difficult for the traditionalists by the change of mind of some of their stalwarts. Yet few of the 'modernists', most open to the continental approach, were prepared to go all the way with their insights. There was a refusal - a significant refusal - to let go of the historical.

It was in this situation that Dodd began his Johannine work; it was the resolution of the problems inherent in it that Dodd suggested was the task that awaited his generation.



References - Chapter I.

1. Dodd, Inaugural, C.U.P., 1936, p.22.
2. Ibid. p.29.
3. Dodd, Eucharistic Symbolism, Expositor, 8th series, 11, 1911, pp.530-46.
4. cf Dodd, Thirty Years, Union Seminary Quarterly Review, V, 1950, pp.5-12; this was an Inaugural Lecture delivered at Union Theological Seminary on 8th February, 1950. cf pp. 5 and 8.
5. Dodd, Review of Bernard, The Congregational Quarterly, 7, 1929, pp.369-71, this quotation p.371.
6. J.B. Lightfoot, Biblical Essays, Macmillan, 1893, p.47.
7. J. Drummond, An inquiry into the character and authorship of the Fourth Gospel, published for the Hibbert Trustees, 1903.
8. W.A. Sanday, The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel, Oxford, 1912; originally prepared for the Morse Lectures of 1904; this quotation from p.5. He was concerned to establish that all scholars are apologists in his sense of the term, that is that for all "Some conclusions are more acceptable than others." p.3f., and he suggested that to deny Apostolic authorship not only meant overturning a respected ancient tradition but also involved suggesting that Christianity was based on a series of deceptions. cf p.3f.
9. cf Ibid. p.81.
10. viz. The Authorship and Character of the Fourth Gospel, 1872, The Gospels in the second century, 1876 and The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel, 1912.
11. Howard, Fourth Gospel, p.21, quoting Sanday.
12. Lightfoot, op cit p.121f.
13. Ibid. p.135.
14. They were not agreed about the order in which they came. Lightfoot suggested that the First Epistle was published with the Gospel as its epilogue while Westcott remained uncertain about which had the priority and Hort had some difficulty in accepting common authorship unless one was prepared to concede a considerable interval between the writings.
15. In Hastings Dictionary of the Bible, volume 3, 1899.
16. Howard, Fourth Gospel, p.67.
17. Ibid. p.68, summarising Holtzmann's position in Einleitung in das Neue Testament, and Handcommentar zum Neue Testament iv.
18. e.g. T. Zahn and B. Weiss.
19. Howard, Fourth Gospel, p.33.
20. Ibid. p.34.

21. cf Sanday, The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel, p.6.
22. cf B.F. Westcott, Commentary, John Murray, 1908, pp.ix-lxxiii. This commentary was published posthumously.
23. Ibid. p.lxxviii.
24. cf Ibid. p.lxxxii.
25. Ibid. p.lxxix.
26. Ibid. p.lxxxiiif, cf p.lxxxiv.
27. cf Ibid. pp.lxxxvii-lxxxix; viz."The Prologue", 1.1-18; "The Narrative", 1.19-21, 23, subdivided "The Self Revelation of Christ to the World", 1.19-12.50, again subdivided into "The Proclamation", 1.19-4.54 and "The Conflict", 5.1-12.50 and "The Self-Revelation of Christ To The Disciples", 13.1-21.23, and again subdivided into "The Last Ministry of Love", "The Victory through Death" and "The Epilogue".
28. Ibid. p.cviii.
29. cf Ibid. p.cviiiif.
30. Ibid. p.xxxixf.
31. Ibid. p.clii.
32. cf Ibid. pp.clxx-clxxvii.
33. Ibid. p.clxxvii.
34. Sanday, The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel, p.2.
35. cf V.H. Stanton, The Gospels as Historical Documents, part 3, C.U.P., 1920, p.280, "Nor is the mental growth which must be assumed to have taken place, if he was one of the Twelve, through having been brought under new influences, and called to meet new intellectual and spiritual needs, perhaps an inconceivable one. But is it probable; more particularly is it probable if John, the son of Zebedee was the disciple in question? I do not think it can be held to be so by anyone who will duly consider the course of his life so far as we know it".
36. Ibid. part one, C.U.P., 1903, p.277.
37. cf Drummond, op cit p.viii, "These two men, so differently constituted, rejected with equal confidence the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel. I mention these points in order to throw light upon my own position. Naturally I should be biased in favour of their view, and yet I have never been able to see the evidence with their eyes. Nevertheless, I have not been moved by reaction against them, for I have never wavered in my reverence for them".
38. Ibid. p.4; viz. 1.19-12.50, "The Relation of Christ to the World", 13-17, "His Relationship to His Disciples" and 18-20 "History of the Passion and Resurrection".
39. cf Ibid. pp.7-20.

40. Ibid. p.16.
41. Ibid. p.358.
42. cf Ibid. p.16-20, where Drummond was well aware that significant differences of content and purpose remained.
43. Ibid. p.26.
44. Ibid. pp.426-29, where it is the title of this chapter.
45. Ibid. p.428.
46. Ibid. p.63, the conclusion of a discussion of some twenty pages in which the areas discussed were the visits to Jerusalem, where he inclined towards the Synoptics; the Last Supper where he inclined towards the Fourth Gospel; the picture of John the Baptist where he saw no reason for rejecting the Synoptics and the Cleansing of the Temple where he finally opted for the Synoptics.
47. Ibid. p.429.
48. cf Ibid. p.47.
49. Ibid. p.37.
50. cf Ibid. p.36f.
51. The summary is Drummond's, Ibid. p.68.
52. cf Ibid. p.176 and 179.
53. Ibid. p.348.
54. Ibid. p.349.
55. Ibid. p.358.
56. Ibid. p.408.
57. Ibid. 429.
58. Martineau, cited Ibid. p.416.
59. Sanday, The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel, p.36.
60. cf Ibid. p.143f.
61. cf Ibid. p.92.
62. Ibid. p.93.
63. Ibid. p.143f.
64. cf Ibid. p.210. "The Synoptists hardly come under the head of thinkers".

65. cf Ibid. p.115, where he considered this argument 'gratuitous'; "Partly the argument goes upon the assumption that the extreme penalty must have been always inflicted. Partly it seems to imply that excommunication was too great a punishment for the disciples, at the very time when death itself was threatened against the Master".
66. Ibid. p.197, citing Harnack, History of Dogma, volume i, p.97.
67. cf Ibid. p.196.
68. Ibid. p.207.
69. cf Ibid. p.226f.
70. Ibid. p.232.
71. Robinson writes of Scott's dictum that "In the Fourth Gospel the messianic idea is replaced by that of the Logos" exercising a mesmeric effect, cf Twelve, p.114 and G.H.C. Macgregor calls Scott's exposition of modern criticism 'admirable' of his commentary, p.vii.
72. E.F. Scott, The Fourth Gospel: its theology and purpose, T. & T. Clark, 1906, all citations from the second edition of 1908; this quotation p.4.
73. Ibid. p.358.
74. He noted that sin is not such a dominant concept in the Fourth Gospel, the death of Christ no longer occupies the central place given it by Paul, and the term 'faith' is absent from the Fourth Gospel.
75. cf Ibid. p.49.
76. cf Ibid. p.62.
77. Ibid. p.353.
78. Ibid. p.235.
79. Ibid. p.68.
80. Ibid. p.74f.
81. Ibid. p.75; "The 'mother of Jesus' dwells in the house of His disciples".
82. Ibid. p.76f.
83. Ibid. p.357f and cf p.103, "Much of the peculiar character of the Gospel is due to that strain of partial sympathy with Gnosticism which underlies its reaffirmation of the great fact of Christianity."
84. Ibid. p.367.
85. cf Ibid. p.105f.
86. Ibid. p.107.

87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid. p.117.
90. cf Ibid. p.124; Scott saw this as a distinguishing feature of the Fourth Gospel; on the same page "He does not discard the common beliefs, even when they clash with his own, but accepts them formally in order to interpret and spiritualise them" and p.188 "The Johannine theology in several of its aspects first becomes intelligible when we thus regard it as expressing the mind of the Church, not merely that of an individual thinker".
91. cf Ibid. p.367, where he remarked "It marks an all-important stage in religious history".
92. Ibid. p.369.
93. Ibid. p.371.
94. Ibid. p.372.
95. Ibid. p.66.
96. cf F.C. Burkitt, The Gospel History and its Transmission, T.& T. Clark, 1906, p.256.
97. W.R. Inge in Essays on some Biblical questions of the day, edited by H.B. Swete, Macmillan, 1909, p.253.
98. cf Ibid. p.254.
99. Ibid. p.263.
100. By 'Idealism' Inge meant Platonic idealism; by 'Mysticism' "That centripetal tendency in thought and feeling which always strives to see unity in difference, the one in the many", p.259, while 'Symbolism' implied that we should be prepared to look for a deeper meaning.
101. R.H. Strachan, The Fourth Evangelist: dramatist or historian? H. & S., 1925, p.26, where he was answering A.E. Garvie's criticism of his The Fourth Gospel, its significance and environment, 1917. Garvie had argued that Strachan had minimised the historical value of the Fourth Gospel.
102. Ibid. p.41.
103. J. Moffatt, An introduction to the literature of the New Testament, T. & T. Clark, 1911, all citations from the third edition of 1918, p.521.
104. cf Essays on some Biblical questions of the day, p.261.
105. Moffatt, op cit p.540.
106. cf Essays on some Biblical questions of the day, p.322.
107. cf Ibid. p.295f.
108. Ibid.

109. Ibid. p.303f.
110. Ibid. p.305.
111. Ibid. p.318.
112. Ibid. p.181.
113. Ibid. p.322.
114. cf Ibid. pp.305-22.
115. Ibid. p.327.
116. Ibid. p.328.
117. A.S. Peake, A commentary on the Bible, T.C. & E.C. Jack, 1919, p.743 column 2.
118. Both published by C.U.P., the quotation is from p.viif of the later volume.
119. B.H. Streeter, The Four Gospels, a study of origins, Macmillan, 1924, all citations from the ninth impression of 1956, p.367, where he averred that John "Is a Jew first and never quite a Greek" and he seems to want to equate 'Mystic' and 'prophet'.
120. Peake, A Critical Introduction to the New Testament, p.170, of Streeter op cit p.459f.
121. cf A.H. McNeile's judgment cited in Robinson's Redating, p.289.
122. Moffatt, op cit p.594.
123. Dodd criticised New Testament scholarship in this period particularly because it had this excessive literary bias.
124. J.A. McClymont, The Century Bible, St. John, Edinburgh, 1901, p.29.
125. Cited by H.L. Jackson in The Problem of the Fourth Gospel, p.100; he also demonstrated Bacon's more extreme conclusions.
126. cf Howard, Fourth Gospel, p.109, who considered this an eccentricity of scholarship.
127. Howard outlined a good number of "Theories of partition and redaction" in Appendix C of the Fourth Gospel where the majority of scholars whose work is considered are continental. English-speaking scholars whose work is reviewed there are B.W. Bacon, J.H. Bernard, A.E. Garvie, R.H. Strachan and F. Warburton-Lewis. A strange omission is J.M. Thompson, who in a number of important articles in The Expositor, anticipated R.T. Fortna's The Gospel of Signs; a reconstruction of the narrative source underlying the Fourth Gospel. Much English-speaking scholarship was thoroughly unsympathetic to such approaches. For example, cf Streeter op cit p.377; "Some of these (theories) are so intricate that merely to state them is to refute them. For if the sources have undergone anything like the amount of amplification, excision, rearrangement and adaptation which the theory postulates, then the critics' pretence that he can unravel the process is grotesque. As well hope to start with a string of sausages and then reconstruct the pig.

128. cf Howard, Fourth Gospel, p.115f. Streeter shared the first two and assumed that manuscripts suffer dislocation; cf op cit p.380, "Everyone who has ever sent manuscript to be copied on a large scale knows that, either through his own inadvertence or that of the copyist, sheets often get transposed, and paragraphs added by way of correction get inserted in the wrong place. The same kind of thing is frequently to be observed in ancient MSS of classical authors".
129. Moffatt, op cit p.558, cf p.561, where he argued that approach alone would not do justice to the dual character of the Gospel.
130. This is discussed later in the context of Dodd's review of the 3rd edition of Strachan's The Fourth Gospel, its significance and environment. In the first edition he suggested that the memoirs of the Apostle had originally been arranged thematically then broken up by an editor who tried to rearrange it chronologically, and in 1925, in The Fourth Evangelist: dramatist or historian? he sought to underscore this theory with linguistic data; he withdrew in 1941, cf p.v. of The Fourth Gospel, its significance and environment.
131. cf Streeter, op cit p.380.
132. cf Howard, Fourth Gospel, p.125.
133. Ibid. p.128, in Appendix D the four theories discussed are from English-speaking scholars.
134. Cited Howard, Fourth Gospel, p.93.
135. The description is R. Schnackenburg's in his Commentary, Volume I, Herder & Herder, 1968, p.138.
136. cf Ibid. p.214. For Howard's verdict including the statement that Bultmann "Ransacks the Mandaean books for parallels" see Fourth Gospel, p.93.
137. cf F.C. Burkitt, The Mandaeans, J.T.S., 19, 1928, pp.225-35, and Church and Gnosis, C.U.P., 1932, pp.92-132. For a sympathetic discussion of V. Taylor, The Mandaeans and the Fourth Gospel, The Hibbert Journal, 28, 1929-30, pp.531-46, he, too, sees no direct influence.
138. For a summary of this position of S.S. Smalley, John, Paternoster, 1978, p.52.
139. Howard, Fourth Gospel, p.63; cf p.162, "In the second decade of this century the attention of scholars was diverted from Hellenic philosophy to the Hellenistic mysteries as a determinative factor in the shaping of early Christian thought and worship".
140. G.H.C. Macgregor, The Fourth Gospel. The background of Christian experience, J.B.L., 49, 1930, pp.150-59, cited Article.
141. Among the similarities are an insistence on the Gospel being written in a period of transition, having a double stance to a number of features in its environment and the insistence on the value of experience. Macgregor intended that his Commentary should reflect Scott's position.

142. Macgregor, Commentary, p.22.
143. Ibid. p.175.
144. Macgregor, Article, p.152.
145. cf Ibid. p.154.
146. cf Ibid, where he quoted with approval Von Hügel's dictum that "The Fourth Gospel is the noblest instance of this kind of literature, of which the truth depends, not on the factual accuracy of the symbolising experiences, but on the truth of the ideas and experiences thus symbolised".
147. cf Macgregor, Commentary, p.xxvi, where he approves of Bacon's theory that John's idealised history is "Genuine and true because it reflects the heart's faith of a great church in a great age".
148. Ibid. p.xxv.
149. Dodd, Thirty Years, p.5.
150. For example, he saw John's interpretation in terms of personal experience, Paul's teaching and the world of Hellenism.
151. Macgregor, Commentary, p.xxvii, citing Scott; this was an age of transition not simply from one culture to another involving breaking links with the last eye-witnesses, but one in which "The eschatological hope had been transmuted into mystical experience", Article, p.157.
152. Macgregor, Article, p.157.
153. cf Macgregor, Commentary, p.xxix.
154. Ibid. p.xxxii.
155. Ibid. p.xxxiv.
156. In this regard he was as vulnerable to Kraeling's criticism as any of his contemporaries; he commended American and British scholarship for not "Swallowing hook, line and sinker with the Mandaic bait" but continued they "Should be urged to adopt an attitude other than that of aloofness from the general discussion". Both quotations from H. Kraeling, The Fourth Gospel and contemporary religious thought, in J.B.L., 49, 1930, see pp. 145 and 146, this was the same volume in which Macgregor's Article was published.
157. Macgregor, Commentary, p.xli.
158. Ibid.
159. cf Howard, Fourth Gospel, p.264.
160. cf Commentary, p.lxvi, where he toyed with the idea that the redactor may have had his opportunity through translating an Aramaic original.
161. Ibid. p.lxvii.
162. Macgregor, Article, p.152.



163. Ibid.
164. Ibid. p.151.
165. Ibid. p.154.
166. E.C. Hoskyns, Review of Bernard, Theology, Vol. 20, 1930, pp.165-71, p.165. Cited Review of Bernard.
167. Hoskyns, Commentary, Faber & Faber, 1940, all citations from the second edition of 1947, this quotation p.41.
168. G.H. Tremmenheere, Doctor Bernard and the Fourth Gospel, C.Q.R., 108, 1929, pp.255-70, p.255. The quotation continued, "For gone is his view that the Gospel was written between A.D. 160 and 170, and aimed at a compromise with Gnosticism. Gone is Schmiedel's contention that it is highly improbable that the author could to any considerable extent have even had personal contact with any of the first generation of Christians and must have been written between 130 and 140". The initial reference was to V. Taylor's The Fourth Gospel and some recent criticism, in the Hibbert Journal, 25, 1926-27, where, among other points, he asserted that "Substantially the issue is whether or not Pauline theology has any factual basis", p.726, and that the discourses represent "A very precious form of religious and Christological thought about the end of the first century", p.742.
169. cf Howard, Fourth Gospel, p.262 and 264, for analysis of Bernard's solutions.
170. viz. 1.19-4.54 + 6 which deal with a ministry of a little over a year; 5,7 and 8-12 a Jerusalem Ministry extending over a second year and 13-20 wholly concerned with the Passion; the whole preceded by a Prologue and followed by an appendix.
171. cf Bernard, Commentary, clxxxvii, "It is vastly more important to learn what the evangelist meant to teach, and what was the picture our Lord that was present to his mind, than to know whether the book was written by an apostle or by a pupil of an apostle, important as this is in its place".
172. cf Ibid. p.xxxvii; in the whole of this he was more confident than H.L. Jackson who concluded a lengthy discussion by arguing that if the Beloved Disciple was not an ideal figure, his identity remains unrevealed cf The Problem of the Fourth Gospel.
173. cf Ibid. p.xlvf, where he described this tradition as worthless; it was accepted by Bacon, Burkitt and Moffatt although rejected by Chapman, Drummond and Lightfoot.
174. The writings of Irenaeus and Polycrates were the others discussed in depth.
175. Bernard, Commentary, p.liv.
176. He accepted that an analysis of style and diction made it impossible to argue for identity of authorship.
177. cf Bernard, Commentary, p.lxx, where he suggests a second-hand relationship by an author with little Aramaic and p.cix for his insistence that he was a disciple.

178. For Papias spoke of Aristion as well as John the Presbyter as "Living disciples" of the Lord; rather weakly Bernard describes them as boys of Commentary, p.liii.
179. Bernard, Commentary, p.lxxxiii.
180. Dodd, Review of Bernard, p.370.
181. Hoskyns, Review of Bernard, p.169.
182. cf Hoskyns, Commentary, p.58 and 112. He speaks of this problem of historicity 'haunting' a generation of scholars.
183. cf Hoskyns, Review of Bernard, p.169, where he argued, "All these rearrangements are demanded by the assumption that the Fourth Gospel must have been originally constructed out of the memory of connected happenings, and out of discourses the sequence of which is not literary but historical".
184. Ibid. p.170.
185. McGregor, Article, p.151f.
186. Bernard, Commentary, p.xc.
187. Ibid. p.lxxxiii, quoting Von Hügel.
188. Dodd, Review of Bernard, p.371.
189. cf Bernard, Commentary, p.lxxxv.
190. Ibid. p.lxxxvii, cf also p.xc.
191. cf Ibid. pp.xc-xciii.
192. Dodd, Review of Bernard, p.370f.
193. Ibid. p.371.
194. Bernard, Commentary, p.clxxxv.
195. The description is Tremenhoe's op cit p.277, who regretted the 'sops' Bernard offered to Cerebus. Instances of such attitude may be seen in the serious consideration given to the theory that Jesus may have foreseen the recovery of the nobleman's son, the impotent man and the man born blind might have been cured by natural means and Lazarus may have been raised from a death-like trance.
196. Dodd, Review of Bernard, p.371; here he puts forward his classical stance for the first time.
197. cf Bernard, Commentary, p.cxiv, the church situation was one in which she had 'Broken her Jewish fetters once for all', p.clviii, but the primary situation is a missionary one in Asia Minor.
198. Ibid. p.cxvi.
199. Ibid. p.161.
200. Ibid. p.105.
201. Hoskyns, Review of Bernard, p.167.

202. cf Dodd, Review of Bernard, p.371.
203. In the Cambridge Texts and Studies series, 1913.
204. Bernard, Commentary, p.clxxxxvii.
205. Dodd, Inaugural, p.40.
206. For example, Barrett and Hoskyns refer to Macgregor but once, and frequently to Bernard in their commentaries. The same pattern is reflected in Lindars' commentary, but Brown cites Macgregor more frequently than Bernard; in this he is alone.
207. Hoskyns, Review of Bernard, p.166; in this he also reviewed J.E. Carpenter, The Johannine writings: a study of the Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel, Constable, 1927. He wrote of Carpenter, that he was one of few British scholars who "Continued to keep English Theology in close and sensitive touch with German liberalism", cf Commentary, p.40f.
208. Hoskyns, Commentary, p.35.
209. Ibid. p.36.
210. Ibid. p.39.

## Chapter II.

### Professor Dodd's Critical Stance on the Fourth Gospel.

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Professor Dodd's Critical Stance on the Fourth Gospel.

The purpose of this chapter is to outline where Dodd stood in relation to certain critical questions throughout his career. Had he written the commentary on the Fourth Gospel that he intended these questions would most naturally have been found in the introduction.<sup>(1)</sup> Our outline begins with Dodd's position as seen in his review of Bernard's commentary, 1928, and ends with his review of Brown's commentary, 1966. One of the commonplaces of Dodd's thought was his conviction that the nineteenth century critics were largely unsuccessful in their handling of the Johannine problem. Towards the end of his distinguished career Dodd looked back over the work of twentieth century criticism. He was prompted to do so because he admired Brown's having read nearly everything written on the Gospel in this century; "He builds up his case in a way which gives assurance that the labour of a century of scholarship, which has sometimes appeared to move unproductively in circles, has not been in vain, and affirms the essential unity of an enterprise into which each of us puts what he has to give."<sup>(2)</sup> Dodd's method was different; he did not acknowledge much of what other Johannine scholars had written and the indices of his works indicate that much of his Johannine work is accomplished within a comparatively narrow circle, some of it with the Doddian school alone.

Date.

It is difficult to isolate the problem of the date of the Fourth Gospel from a host of related questions. While there is some movement in his position, Dodd never changed his fundamental position on the date of the Fourth Gospel, although the climate of critical opinion changed appreciably in the period under review. On the other hand, as Dodd himself observed in 1932, "The questions of authorship and date have lost much of their interest",<sup>(3)</sup> thus showing a tremendous change of interest within a generation, yet on the other hand there has been an

emphatic movement towards an early date for the Fourth Gospel.<sup>(4)</sup>

Dodd's position was neatly summarised in "The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments": "It is in the Fourth Gospel, which in form and expression, as probably in date, stands farthest from the original tradition of the teaching, that we have the most penetrating exposition of its central message."<sup>(5)</sup> Elsewhere he was to put dates to the Fourth Gospel: In "The Bible and its Background" he suggested that we might place the letters of Paul and a compilation of the sayings of Jesus in the period 50 to 65; Mark, Matthew, Luke-Acts, 65 to 95, while John along with the Johannine Epistles is to be placed in the period 95 to 120, the First Epistle being later than the Gospel.<sup>(6)</sup> The publication of the newly discovered Rylands Papyrus did not compel him to alter his limits, but it did lead him to argue that 120 was the latest date.<sup>(7)</sup> Dodd had never been convinced by the school of thought which argued that the Fourth Gospel was not written until the second half of the second century. At the end of his career in response to a letter from John Robinson urging an early date for the Fourth Gospel, Dodd wrote "...as you know, I am very much in sympathy with a view which makes it possible to derive from John not only valuable light on the primitive church, but even authentic information about the Jesus of history. I cannot help thinking that you will find it difficult to persuade people of the very early date which you now wish to assign (i.e. no later than 65)....For myself, with every motive for assigning an early date, I found this encountered too many difficulties for me to overcome."<sup>(8)</sup> Whilst Dodd continued by noting that "Much of this late dating is quite arbitrary, even wanton"<sup>(9)</sup>, he concluded "But I still feel that the Fourth Gospel has reasons of its own for resisting attempts to place it very early in the time scale."<sup>(10)</sup>

There was movement in Dodd's thought; in "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" he was prepared to consider a date very close to 100, preferably a little before, rather than after.<sup>(11)</sup> This position is

is maintained in "The Founder of Christianity".<sup>(12)</sup> This is not a significant movement in that it did not in any way compel Dodd to reconsider the essential nature of the Fourth Gospel or his characteristic picture of the Fourth Evangelist. If one is to seek significant movement it might well be towards a late date. Very early in his career, 1926, Dodd was fairly imprecise, as perhaps befitted the readership; "The writer (of the Fourth Gospel) was probably himself not of the first Christian generation."<sup>(13)</sup> It is probably wrong to make much of this, since "The Gospel in the New Testament" was written for Sunday School teachers, and in his popular books Dodd had a developed sense of responsibility towards those who might have been scandalised by opinions that he did not have the opportunity to develop in such works.

It is not clear whether it is the Fourth Gospel that has reasons of its own for resisting an early date, or whether these reasons spring from Dodd's own understanding of the purpose and place of origin of the Fourth Gospel. Consistently he maintained that it was in the Fourth Gospel that we have the most penetrating exposition of the central New Testament message. It appears as though Dodd implicitly argued, and later accepted, the view that this meant that the Fourth Gospel was among the latest of the New Testament books. Certainly Dodd never explicitly argues that maturity of thought involves a late date. He does not explicitly deny that theological maturity might have much to do with the community of individual that produced the book. Nonetheless, in the absence of any significant argument it appears as though Dodd assumes that the most penetrating exposition of the teaching of Jesus involves a late date. This is obviously unsatisfactory. I suggest that Dodd's late dating springs, to a great extent, from his understanding of the Fourth Evangelist as the 'Master Propagator' of the Gospel to the Hellenistic world, one whose work anticipated that of the Apologists.

## The Origin of the Fourth Gospel.

Early in his career Dodd argued for the Ephesian origin of the Fourth Gospel; in 1926 he wrote "The writer was probably himself not of the first Christian generation, but in the communal life of the Church at Ephesus, to which he belonged, he stood in the centre of a living tradition going back to very early days, and very likely preserving much authentic reminiscence of the first witnesses of Christ."<sup>(14)</sup> The traditional association of the Fourth Evangelist with Ephesus was accepted in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel."<sup>(15)</sup> In this work Dodd noted that Paul's work at Ephesus had, to some extent, prepared the ground for the theological work of the Fourth Evangelist. The two most important features were Paul's willingness to use "Current modes of thought to illuminate the Gospel"<sup>(16)</sup> and the possibility of Johannine thought being influenced by Paul's "Cosmical Christology".<sup>(17)</sup> What Dodd did not apparently appreciate was that this called into question the fundamental reason for the late date of the Gospel. It was as possible for this thought to have developed in the seventies as in the late nineties of the first century. Again, the most mature expression of the central New Testament message has been identified with a late date.

Dodd maintained the Ephesian origin of the Gospel right through his career. In "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" this opinion, plus the belief in the late date, has been used to argue for the authenticity of the Johannine tradition. One example must suffice at this stage; 11.54 mentions Ephraim. Dodd argued that:

"The town of Ephraim is not otherwise known to the New Testament. The uncertainty about its exact situation is in no way unfavourable to the view that John is here reproducing traditional information. It is rather favourable to it, since an author writing at Ephesus late in the first century would scarcely be aware of, or interested in, an obscure Palestinian town, and any mysterious or symbolic meaning is out of the question."<sup>(18)</sup>



Dodd's position, then, is consistent, but neither the argument from profundity of expression nor that from Ephesian origin demand the late date that Dodd consistently offered, and, as we shall argue later, involves him in a very unsatisfactory view of the relationship of the Fourth Evangelist to the tradition he employed.

As we have seen, in 1928 Bernard abandoned the idea of Apostolic authorship of the Fourth Gospel, yet argued that the Evangelist was dependent for most of his narrative on the reminiscences of John, son of Zebedee. Dodd called this theory one of "Duplicate authorship". He was not impressed by it, suggesting that it was "No doubt comforting to those who would feel uneasy about rejecting primitive tradition, while their critical conscience forbids them to believe that such a work as this was actually produced by one of the Twelve."<sup>(19)</sup> Dodd rejected the theory.<sup>(20)</sup> There is indeed ancient non-Synoptic material in the Fourth Gospel, but it "Is not for the most part of a kind which suggests derivation from the Galilaean group."<sup>(21)</sup> In this review Dodd did not discuss the derivation of this material. His second, and major reason for rejecting Bernard's theory was that he offered only an apparent dual authorship for, "When we turn from the introduction to the commentary itself, we find that the concession to criticism is almost illusory, for John, son of Zebedee, is still made responsible for the narrative and the substance of the discourses to so large an extent that the strict historicity of the narrative is hardly affected by the intervention of the evangelist."<sup>(22)</sup> In fact, on Bernard's terms it is doubtful if the strict historicity could have been so affected since the Evangelist too had heard Jesus speak, and was one of His First Disciples, though not of the 'inner circle'.<sup>(23)</sup>

However, if he was not convinced by the theory offered, Dodd was convinced of the significance of Bernard's concession; "Actually, the adoption of such a theory by so cautious a scholar, may well be taken

as marking the definite victory of criticism over tradition in one of its most strongly entrenched positions, and it is not likely that a permanent halt will be made at the point where Bernard takes his stand."<sup>(24)</sup> At this stage in his career Dodd welcomed this victory of criticism over tradition. Indeed in this early stage of his career Dodd had some positive leaning towards the 'modern' stance as far as the Fourth Gospel was concerned.<sup>(25)</sup> In this respect at least, Dodd's positive leaning towards the 'modern' view coincided with his understanding of the Fourth Evangelist.

As his thought developed, Dodd's rejection of apostolic authorship was a little less trenchant, although his rejection was consistent. In "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" he did not totally exclude the possibility of apostolic authorship. He wrote:

"I am not in this book discussing the question of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel. I should not care to say that the hypothesis is impossible, that the Johannine narrative rests upon personal reminiscences, transformed through the changing experiences of a long life, after the manner imagined by Browning in 'A Death in the Desert'. We do not know what effect many years of active intercourse with Hellenistic circles may have had upon a Palestinian Jew - even upon a Galilaean fisherman - with an agile, and adventurous intelligence, but some of the evidence which had been adduced in favour of authorship by an eye-witness, is subject to a heavy discount."<sup>(26)</sup>

There is no mistaking Dodd's view that such an hypothesis is extremely unlikely. In fact the implicit picture of the Evangelist in this book is incompatible with apostolic authorship.

There is some slight movement in "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel". In the introduction there is a brief review of the evidence and one gets the impression that, whereas in his review of

Bernard's commentary, Dodd could assume that the majority of his readers were convinced that the Apostle John was not the author, here he is moving carefully, well aware that the possibility of apostolic authorship was more favourably received. Again, while demonstrating that the arguments in favour of apostolic authorship are not very strong, it is the picture of the Evangelist that is crucial. Allowing for the influence of a long stay in Ephesus, Dodd argued that "It is the combination of rabbinic and Hellenistic motives, their combination at a deep level, that should give us pause."<sup>(27)</sup> He noted:

"If the balance of probability should appear to be on the side of authorship by John, son of Zebedee, much of what is written in the following pages would require some modification, but I do not think it would fall to the ground. The material ascribed here to tradition would turn out to be the apostle's own reminiscences; but even so, it would be obvious that they had been cast at one stage into the mould of the corporate tradition of the Church, as why they should not be, if the apostle was actively immersed in just that ministry of preaching, teaching and liturgy which ex-hypothesi gave form to the substance of the Church's memories of its Founder? However, for reasons given, I cannot think this is a probable solution of the problem of authorship, though no one can say it is impossible. In what follows, I have used the name John, for the author, without prejudice, and I have not thought it necessary to place it in inverted commas."<sup>(28)</sup>

This has been cited at length partly because it does show some movement; maybe the last sentence is significant; and certainly shows Dodd handling the problem with more patience and caution than in his review of Bernard's commentary. Moreover, it shows a satisfactory understanding of the relationship of the Apostle to the tradition; an understanding far more satisfactory than that which Dodd proposed most frequently for the relationship between the Evangelist and the tradition which he

employed. Finally, it affords the basis of a comparison with R.E. Brown's well known five-stage model for the composition of the Fourth Gospel.<sup>(29)</sup>

Dodd considered Brown's model a "Somewhat complicated theory"<sup>(30)</sup>, but what he does not make at all clear is that for Brown the outstanding personality behind the group responsible for the Gospel is the Apostle John, whose influence is to be seen in stages one to four.<sup>(31)</sup> Thus, while Dodd might write "But however, many contributors there may be, they are all under the influence of one outstanding personality, who is the authority behind the book and may fairly be called its 'author', in a sense better understood in antiquity than in our own day, although he wrote not a word of it",<sup>(32)</sup> Dodd has not, in fact, attempted to grapple with Brown's work in the area of apostolic authorship. There is no mention at all in the review that Brown offers a defence of the apostolic authorship of the Gospel. One can only guess why this was so, for on the whole Dodd seems to open to Brown's theory; "Perhaps Professor Brown scarcely expects his readers to accept literally the exact succession of various stages of composition, except as a 'model', but the scheme unquestionably helps to clarify the movement of thought, with its sometimes surprising transitions."<sup>(33)</sup> In all probability, like Brown, Dodd saw one dominant mind behind the Gospel; whereas Brown could reconcile this with apostolic authorship in the sense that the Apostle John was the dominant figure within the group of his Disciples, Dodd did not think in terms of a group within which the Gospel developed, but one single mind, well imbued with Hellenistic and Jewish ideas, from which the Gospel sprang. The picture of the Evangelist is again crucial in Dodd's apparent inability to reconsider the possibility of apostolic authorship right at the end of his career.

Dodd, then, consistently rejected apostolic authorship; his grounds for doing so changed, and it might well be that his work in "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" should have enabled him to move in the

direction towards a reconsideration of apostolic authorship, a move which Dodd could not finally take. As we shall argue, this failure has led him to an unsatisfactory understanding of the relationship of the Evangelist to the tradition he employed.

#### The Relationship of the Fourth Gospel to the Synoptics.

In the early part of his career Dodd argued that the Fourth Evangelist knew and used Mark and probably all the Synoptic Gospels. This may most clearly be seen in "The Close of the Galilaean Ministry", 1921.<sup>(34)</sup> This was an early and significant article in which, having noted the possibility of an independent tradition behind the Fourth Gospel, he concluded "Nothing which has come out in the course of this discussion is contrary to the natural and generally recognised assumption that the author of the Fourth Gospel made use of Mark."<sup>(35)</sup> We note in passing, that Dodd described this as a "natural assumption". He argued that in Mark 6. 30-7.37 and 8.1-26 we "Have more or less alternative versions of the same series of events."<sup>(36)</sup> The Fourth Evangelist is, on the whole, much closer to the first account, but there are a few indications that he knows the second as well. Dodd accounted for this in terms of the Fourth Evangelist's knowledge of Mark; "It seems at least highly probable that John is here writing with Mark before him, or in his memory, although he is by no means merely copying."<sup>(37)</sup>

It may well be that Dodd under-estimated the significance of this article. B.H. Streeter was impressed by "The large proportion of sayings derived by John from Mark"<sup>(38)</sup> and went on to write of the significance of Dodd's article; "The argument cannot be done justice to if presented briefly, but if, as I am inclined to think, it is sound, it affords a strong confirmation of John's use of Mark."<sup>(39)</sup> Perhaps, even more significantly, R.H. Strachan, writing after P. Gardner-Smith's "Saint John and the Synoptic Gospels", 1938, and noting that Gardner-Smith had dealt a 'body blow' to the assumption of John's dependence on Mark and Luke, observed that "A stronger case for John's knowledge of

Mark is based by Dodd on the result of a comparison of John 6.1-7.10 with Mark 6.31-10.1".<sup>(40)</sup> Thus, in 1921, Dodd not only agreed that John had used Mark, but his article had gone some long way towards establishing this conclusion in the eyes of two significant New Testament scholars.

Even at this stage in the discussion it is necessary to note briefly that Dodd withdrew from his conclusion that John knew and used Mark. In "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" he argued and demonstrated that John was dependent upon an independent tradition for this part of the Gospel. In that later discussion Dodd does not refer to his earlier article, although in it he had raised the possibility that some of John's variations might well be due to the use of a source in addition to Mark and urged his readers not to overlook the possibility that these might well be "Under whatever disguise, a genuinely historical tradition not wholly dependent upon the Synoptic record."<sup>(41)</sup> Interestingly, in "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" one of the supporting arguments frequently offered for John's use of an independent tradition is that Dodd cannot conceive of the Fourth Evangelist creating a pastiche out of elements from the various Synoptic Gospels. At the beginning of his career he was prepared to conceive of his conflation of two Marcan narratives.

Dodd did not move to his classical position quickly. In his review of Bernard he held to John's use of the Synoptics. The same position was maintained in 1932, in "Present Tendencies in the Criticism of the Gospels,"<sup>(42)</sup> an article in which he was taking stock of the current scene. Here Dodd argued that the second major advance in Johannine studies was the

"Re-entry of the Johannine problem into the orbit of the Synoptic problem. It is one of the merits of Streeter's book, "The Four Gospels, a Study of Origins", that it shows that the case of the Fourth Gospel is after all not wholly different from that of the Synoptics. Like Matthew and Luke it uses Mark as a source, together with one or more unknown sources."<sup>(43)</sup>

A shift of opinion may be detected in the late nineteen thirties. In his contribution to K.E. Kirk's "The Study of Theology", 1939<sup>(44)</sup> Dodd observed that "Johannine criticism is still in a state of flux"<sup>(45)</sup> and that the present state of Johannine criticism could best be represented by a series of questions. Among these questions was that concerning the Fourth Evangelist's use of the Synoptic Gospels.<sup>(46)</sup> We can detect too, that Dodd's understanding at this point was in a state of flux. In "The Gospels as History, a Reconsideration", 1938<sup>(47)</sup> and "The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ", his first contribution to T.W. Manson's "A Companion to the Bible", 1939,<sup>(48)</sup> Dodd argued that John had used Mark, but in "History and the Gospel", 1938, Dodd asserted of the Fourth Gospel's Passion narrative that "John, while he may be in some measure indebted to Mark, has in substance followed an independent tradition."<sup>(49)</sup> It was in this book that Dodd first referred to the work of Gardner-Smith, a fellow member of the Senior Common Room at Jesus College, Cambridge; "I hope to review the evidence in favour of this view (i.e. that John is independent of Mark) in a forthcoming book. Reference may be made to Gardner-Smith "St. John and the Synoptic Gospels!"<sup>(50)</sup> That forthcoming book was to be "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel", 1963, based on the Sarum Lectures at Oxford, 1954-55. Without being 'cavalier' it is worth mentioning that rarely did Dodd feel the need to refer to such a work in this way, so much of his own work being accomplished within the framework of Dodd's own studies.

In his early consideration of Gardner-Smith's work, Dodd does not appear to have accepted the thesis without reservations. In his review of R.H. Strachan's "The Fourth Gospel: its Significance and Environment" and W.F. Howard's "Christianity According to St. John", 1943,<sup>(51)</sup> he noted that an assumption had once been held that the Synoptic Gospels, or at least Mark, served as a principal source of John, but now both authors stressed what is common to John and the Synoptic Gospels in

spite of all the differences and that:

"Both are in fact are disposed to accept, though with reservations, the thesis set forth recently by Mr. Gardner-Smith that the Fourth Evangelist wrote directly out of an independent tradition which in some points overlapped or coincided with the synoptic tradition, and was in any case a variant of the common central tradition of Apostolic Christianity; and that there is no sufficient internal evidence that he knew any of our Synoptic Gospels".<sup>(52)</sup>

Dodd noted that the widespread acceptance accorded Gardner-Smith's thesis showed that the time was ripe for such re-evaluation of a long held assumption. Dodd seemed unwilling to accept the results of this re-evaluation as presented by Gardner-Smith; "He, (Gardner-Smith) has shown at least that the case for John's dependence on the Synoptics is far less securely founded than was supposed. The reservations, however, made by both our authors are worthy of note."<sup>(53)</sup> I have not been able to find any such reservations in Strachan's book. As noted above, Strachan observed that Dodd's argument in "The close of the Galilaean Ministry" was stronger than the case built on verbal parallels, but his conclusions stand without qualification; "The general position taken up by the present writer is that a very convincing case has been made out for the hypothesis that the Fourth Evangelist had access to a collection of written sources, parallel to, and cognate with, those employed by Mark and Luke."<sup>(54)</sup> The one proviso noted by Howard is that before the publication of the Fourth Gospel there was some verbal assimilation to a few of the Marcan and Lucan narratives. These were the work of an editor.<sup>(55)</sup>

The reservations seem to be Dodd's. It is strange that he could not at this stage face the logical consequences of his own argument that the Fourth Evangelist stood in the centre of an ancient living tradition at Ephesus, but there is no doubt that he came to realise the full significance of Gardner-Smith's work; "The turn of the tide



might be marked, for this country, by the publication of Gardner-Smith's "St. John and the Synoptic Gospels", 1938, a book which crystallised the doubts of many, and has exerted an influence out of proportion to its size."<sup>(56)</sup> While this conclusion was indeed consonant with the implications of some of Dodd's own work, he was some time in accepting the full implications of the thesis. In 1949 he had not finally dismissed the possibility that John knew the other Gospels; noting that John had steeped himself in the tradition, Dodd continued "Possibly he read the other Gospels, although I see no compelling reason why he should have done so."<sup>(57)</sup> As late as 1953, the most Dodd would go to was "The prima facie impression is that John is, in large measure, working independently of the other written Gospels."<sup>(58)</sup>

In the last part of his career Dodd is rightly remembered as the one who, more than any other, demonstrated so massively the independence of the Johannine tradition. This review will conclude, in this section, by noting his movement towards that position. Even before the publication of "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" it is possible to see the Doddian thesis in embryo. In "According to the Scriptures"<sup>(59)</sup> Dodd argued that the Fourth Evangelist had access to a tradition with a use of testimonies that was independent of the Synoptic usage. Thus, the Fourth Gospel was not dependent upon the Synoptics and its testimonies were drawn from the pre-canonical tradition and merit serious attention as an entrance to that tradition. Yet two years later, 1954, in "The Dialogue Form in the Gospels"<sup>(60)</sup> he noted that there remained the possibility that John knew and used the Synoptic Gospels. At this stage in his understanding of the Fourth Gospel, Dodd did not dismiss this possibility as very unlikely, and indeed it seems that he considered it the explanation that his audience would offer, and so the next move has something of the character of advocacy about it; "But we have to be prepared for the possibility that he (the Fourth Evangelist)

had at his disposal a still fluid tradition, not yet crystallised into fixed forms, which he could deal with as he chose. There are some indications that this may have been so."<sup>(61)</sup> In this period the most significant article was "Some Johannine 'Herrenworte' with parallels in the Synoptic Gospels", 1955,<sup>(62)</sup> In this article Dodd examined four Dominical sayings from the Fourth Gospel which have parallels in the Synoptic Gospels. To this article we shall return in another context, but the well documented conclusion is that "John is to be regarded as transmitting independently a special form of the common oral tradition, and not as dependent upon the Synoptic Gospels."<sup>(63)</sup> This was the most significant of a series of articles, all published before "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel", which showed Dodd moving in one direction, the discovery and description of an ancient tradition behind the Fourth Gospel.<sup>(64)</sup> This work demonstrated the Fourth Gospel's independence of the Synoptics. In this conclusion Dodd had departed radically from his earlier stance, although in that stance he had always been prepared to see some independent Johannine tradition. It took him some time to reach his classical position but he asserted it to the end of his career, although he noted, "It would still be rejected by some of our most influential scholars, but it does seem to be making its way."<sup>(65)</sup>

It remains to ask why it took Dodd so long to search for this independent Johannine tradition. It was in 1921 that he first signalled the possibility of this, yet it was only after some forty years that he demonstrated its real extent and elaborated upon the consequences of this for New Testament criticism. Moreover, even then, he was not asking the pertinent question about the historical reliability of that tradition. He did not attempt this in any major work but only in the rather unsatisfactory "The Founder of Christianity", 1970. Even if we take seriously the fact that both "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" and "The Founder of Christianity" have their origin in lectures given in 1954-55, there is still a very considerable lapse of time involved. It seems

again that Dodd was rather slow in accepting the consequences of his own critical work and was loath to reject a position that he had accepted and argued for.

### The Historical Value of the Fourth Gospel.

Dodd's understanding of the historical value of the Fourth Gospel totally changed in the course of his career. Although some of the important issues are discussed in a following chapter, "The Authority of History", it is necessary in this chapter to demonstrate the extent of Dodd's change of mind. Despite the early assertions that there is some valuable tradition behind the Fourth Gospel, Dodd baldly asserted in his review of Barnard's commentary that "As usually happens, insistence upon the historical value of the Fourth Gospel tends to a depreciation of the Synoptics (which can only end in a far reaching distrust of all our sources)".<sup>(66)</sup> The conclusion that Dodd so baldly asserted in 1929 was put forward more gently as suited the readership some three years earlier; "The Fourth Gospel, as we have seen, cannot be placed on precisely the same level (as the Synoptics) for the purpose of historical enquiry."<sup>(67)</sup> His considered position in this early period may be seen in "The Authority of the Bible". There he argued,

"We may now say with confidence that for strictly historical material with the minimum of subjective interpretation, we must not go to the Fourth Gospel. Its religious value stands beyond challenge, and it is more fully appreciated when its contribution to our knowledge of the 'bare facts' of the life of Jesus becomes a secondary interest. That is not to say that it makes no such contribution. But it is to the Synoptic Gospels that we must go if we wish to recover the oldest and purest tradition of the facts."<sup>(68)</sup>

It was this position that received Howard's commendation as "a far more discriminating judgement" than that of those who, in this period, totally

wrote off the historical value of the Fourth Gospel.

It was this refusal to write off totally the historical value of the Fourth Gospel that marked Dodd off from the liberal critics, but as is seen most clearly in his review of Bernard's commentary where he is reacting against a conservative scholar, he did not rate the historical value of the Fourth Gospel very highly. Moreover, to fail to realise, as Dodd thought the earlier critical movement did, that the Fourth Gospel is, in some important ways unlike the Synoptics, was to be left with,

"The impression that John was inferior to the Synoptics in every quality that a Gospel should possess;-in the historicity of its narrative, the accuracy of its reported discourse, and the truth of its picture of 'the Jesus of History.' Where they could interpret John from the standpoint of the Synoptics they found it wanting, and where it could not be understood from that standpoint they were at a loss." (69)

That is true but from our standpoint it is necessary to note that at this stage in his career historical accuracy was not for Dodd an important criterion in assessing the value of the Fourth Gospel. The Fourth Gospel was much more concerned with the interpretation of the story of Jesus than with the story itself. Dodd continued to hold this as late as 1949. Commenting on the obvious differences between the Synoptics and John, he wrote, "The chief reason for this is that John has aimed at giving an interpretation of the life of Jesus rather than one more record, and an interpretation for a new public." (70) The identical position is asserted in the appendix to "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel", though there Dodd is concerned to state that the Fourth Evangelist does full justice to Christianity's being an historical religion. (71)

Dodd is remembered now as one who made an extensive use of the Fourth Gospel in his "Quest of the Historical Jesus". This will be

discussed in a later chapter, but it remains to note that this use was utterly discontinuous with his earliest stance on the problem. The change in Dodd's position may fairly be claimed to arise from his work of recovering and describing a Johannine strain of the tradition. The greater the extent of this tradition became apparent the more impressed by it Dodd became. This was allied to his understanding of the Fourth Gospel as the most mature expression of the central New Testament message. By this time Dodd had become fully aware of the implications of Christianity's being a historical religion. Implicitly he moved to the position that the most mature expression of the central New Testament message contained the most historically reliable tradition. The extent of this change may be illustrated from Dodd's use of the discourses in his quest when he had once written,

"Similarly, the attempt to fit as much as possible of the discourses by hook or by crook into the historical conditions of the ministry of Jesus, while admitting the necessity of attributing portions of them to the reflexions of the Evangelist, tends to hinder the full appreciation of them as the expression of a consistent and massive theology in which history and experience are fused."<sup>(72)</sup>

It was in this review that Dodd also warned that to insist upon the historical value of the Fourth Gospel leads one to undervalue the Synoptics in this respect. Ironically, as we shall see, this is a fair judgement on his "The Founder of Christianity".

#### Dodd and the Miraculous.

The major part of this discussion belongs to the chapter "The Authority of History". There it will be argued that Dodd's handling has been neither consistent nor totally satisfactory. Both early, and late Dodd was not sure of the factual basis of the miracle narratives and at times tried to evade the question. Dodd correctly criticised Bernard's very unsatisfactory understanding that the 'Master of Ceremonies'

at Cana may have been led by the magnetism of Jesus to think that he was drinking wine instead of water. Dodd at this stage believed that the Evangelist employed allegory and he suggested that Jesus "Did, and does, offer the rich wine of a satisfying communion with God in place of thin and tasteless substitutes."<sup>(73)</sup> At this stage in his career Dodd appeared to have some real difficulty with the miraculous. In his criticism of Bernard, he continued "But is it really more consonant with the religious intention of the Gospel to suppose that if Jesus did not conjure water into wine neither did he hypnotize people into thinking that He had done so?"<sup>(74)</sup> 'Conjure' is a very interesting choice of word, carrying with it a definite value judgment. It is a word that for some is offensive, and certainly accords ill with Dodd's insistence on the factual nature of the 'Christ Event'. In 1933, Dodd addressed himself to the problem of miracles. In "Miracles of the Gospels"<sup>(75)</sup> he argued that the miracles cannot either "Be treated as objective evidence for the supernatural status and powers of Christ"<sup>(76)</sup> or with many liberal commentators rationalised away.<sup>(77)</sup> As so often he found that the Fourth Evangelist has

"shown us a better way. In reading this story, he says in effect, you should not think of loaves or fishes, or of any material food.....You should see in it a 'sign', a symbol that is, of the fact that when Christ came the 'true bread' from heaven was given to men, by which they have eternal life. There is still a question to be answered, and a question of fact, but it is no longer, Did Jesus on a day make five loaves satisfy five thousand people . or if not, what modifications of the proportions will make the tale credible? But, Did Jesus really bring a new kind of spiritual life into the world, and can we still live by it? -That is a serious question; the other is trivial in comparison."<sup>(78)</sup>

Dodd knew that he was vulnerable to criticism on this point; that he

might be accused of allegorical interpretation, but he was prepared to argue that correct allegorical interpretation was a legitimate tool. In this article Dodd did ask the question "Did Jesus work the miracles attributed to him?"<sup>(79)</sup> There is no unequivocal answer in this article, although he realised full well that "Any knowledge we have of the life and teaching of Jesus rests upon sources which record miracles."<sup>(80)</sup> Dodd was careful not to exclude the possibility of the miraculous but there is no doubt that questions in terms of strict historicity were considered relatively unimportant compared to recognising "The value of the story as a symbolic statement of the fundamental conviction of those who told it, that the true supernatural, the Divine power to recreate the life of men, had entered into their experience."<sup>(81)</sup> It is fair to say that Dodd did not grapple satisfactorily with this problem at any stage in his career. This was a notable deficiency in a scholar whose classical stance emphasised the factual nature of the Christ-event and the tradition through which we have knowledge of it. Bernard could have spoken not only for himself but also for the classical Dodd when he wrote "It is one thing to spiritualise history; it is quite another to put forth as history a narrative which is not based on fact."<sup>(82)</sup>

Dodd may have been enabled to avoid facing the question of the miraculous directly because he believed that the Fourth Gospel was primarily a gospel of experience. This belief was something of a commonplace in certain quarters and in Great Britain owed much to the work of E.F. Scott. In so far as Dodd embraced this idea, it was to emphasise the corporate experience of the church; "He (the Fourth Evangelist) has gone back to the beginning of Christianity with the insight derived from long Christian experience; not individual experience alone, though his own experience was exceptionally deep and real."<sup>(83)</sup> An indication of the importance of this corporate experience may be seen in part two of "The Authority of the Bible" being entitled "The Authority of Corporate Experience".<sup>(84)</sup>

As Dodd understood it,

"The historical facts of the life of Jesus had created a community, and within it they had become something more than remembered facts, for their eternal meaning had entered into the experience of His friends. The Master who had broken bread for them, became to them the real Bread of the soul....History, which had once happened in space and time, was repeated perpetually as the drama of the redemption of the soul. Out of the life of this community of the friends of Jesus the Fourth Gospel comes, interpreting the facts through their value in experience." (85)

#### The Influence of Paul on the Fourth Gospel.

It had once been axiomatic to consider Pauline theology the pre-supposition of Johannine theology. The Fourth Evangelist was considered the greatest of the followers of Paul. As we have already seen in his discussion of the Ephesian origin of the Fourth Gospel, Dodd suggested that Paul had, in some small way, prepared the way for John. At no stage in his career did Dodd deny that Paul had some influence. But as early as 1932 he maintained that "It now looks as if the dependence of John on Paul has been greatly exaggerated." (86) He urged "We have to allow for a strain of thought in early Christianity persisting alongside the Pauline strain - a Jewish-Hellenistic strain beginning far back and developing in the direction indicated by the Fourth Gospel, the Odes and Ignatius." (87) Nonetheless, Dodd thought that the approach to John through Paul, had at least been partly successful;

"It cannot be denied that this approach to the Fourth Gospel was fruitful. The teaching of Paul does indeed provide a partial key to its thought which was lacking when it was placed among the historical, rather than among the theological writings of the New Testament. That the evangelist has not escaped the influence of the first great Christian theologian, an influence exercised in the region with which the Fourth Gospel is geographically associated, is clear." (88)



Yet in this article he also argued that "The actual range of Pauline influence upon Jphannine thought has been exaggerated."<sup>(89)</sup>

In this area of Fourth Gospel criticism, as in many others, Dodd reflected the current consensus but, as in many of the others, his arguments were moderate, neither claiming too little nor too much. A characteristic feature of his scholarship was his ability to weigh the evidence and arguments of others carefully and present a balanced conclusion without in any way suggesting, at this stage, that his own Fourth Gospel criticism could be innovative.

#### Theories of Partition, Redaction and Textual Displacement.

As we have seen in the first chapter, the early years of this century were characterised by many attempts to produce acceptable theories of partition, redaction and textual displacement. Knowing that the classical Dodd argued that the Fourth Gospel was in its correct order and the work of a singularly penetrative mind, it comes as something of a shock to realise that Dodd initially welcomed these endeavours. The first significant advance as Dodd then saw it was "The abandonment of both sides (conservatives and liberals) of the dogma of the unity of the Gospel."<sup>(90)</sup> Then, as now, 'dogma' was a loaded term. To use Dodd's own illustration, this abandonment was the first step out of the trenches.<sup>(91)</sup> He noted the work of the liberals Wellhausen and Strachan, and the conservatives Spitta and Garvie, and observed "Today there is hardly a scholar of note who would maintain the strict homogeneity of the work."<sup>(92)</sup> Three years before, in his review of Bernard's commentary, he was already moving towards this position. Here he obviously thought that the attack upon the axiom -Dodd's term in this review -of the 'seamless robe' was of great importance.<sup>(93)</sup> He noted that "Serious in-roads have been made upon this theory from all sides."<sup>(94)</sup> Within the review Dodd considered first the order of the text, and observed that "It has come to be widely held that many of the difficulties of the Gospel may be due to accidental displacements since the work was completed."<sup>(95)</sup> He was partially

impressed by Bernard's restored order; "Such 'restorations' of order do certainly cause the work to read more smoothly in some respects. The only question is whether a more thorough-going criticism might not be forced to admit that the confusion of order goes deeper than a mere displacement of the sheets of a completed work, and belongs partly at least to the process of composition from sources."<sup>(96)</sup> Dodd argued that implicitly Bernard did allow for such a process in his distinction between the memories of John, son of Zebedee, from which John the Presbyter wrote the Gospel in which he included as a prologue, a hymn to the Logos, in which he inserted comments of his own.<sup>(97)</sup> Three years later, in 1932, Dodd was convinced of the significance of Bernard's concession;

"Even so ultra-conservative a commentator as the late Archbishop Bernard no longer attributes the Gospel as a whole to the Beloved Disciple but distinguishes the tradition handed down by John the son of Zebedee from the Gospel composed on the basis of that tradition by a follower of his. This single admission has opened the way to fresh solutions of hitherto insoluble problems."<sup>(98)</sup>

In his Cambridge Inaugural Lecture, 1936, Dodd again surveyed the scene, repeating the hopes and affirmations made above. He described the whole endeavour as "The belated attempt to analyse the Fourth Gospel, like the Synoptics, into strata and sources."<sup>(99)</sup> He also noted that despite many attempts "So far no particular theory shows signs of general acceptance."<sup>(100)</sup> More interestingly in this lecture he seems to have entertained doubts about the whole approach. He observed that;

"At best it may be possible to mark a sentence here and there as suggesting by its terms, or by the grammatical construction of the passage, the work of an editor; but for any far-reaching analysis we do not seem at present to have sufficient evidence in the concrete, external facts of language and form, though it seems possible that the Aramaists may have something to say about

this. In any case, the attempts to distinguish various strata depends far more on a consideration of the ideas and intentions of the writer, and before it can have any cogency we must be sure that we understand what he is about."<sup>(101)</sup>

Thus the first task is that of interpretation; "In short, the problem of criticism resolves itself into the problem of interpretation."<sup>(102)</sup> This is a most significant change in direction and clearly shows Dodd moving towards the position for which he is well known. Shortly we shall argue that this was all of a piece with Dodd's agenda for New Testament criticism generally. In this change of direction Dodd's work was innovative.

By this time he came to review Hoskyns's commentary, Dodd had not entirely given up the quest for separate elements in the Fourth Gospel, although he commended Hoskyns for treating it as a unity;

"It is an outstanding feature of this commentary that it strenuously maintains the unity and coherence of the Fourth Gospel in all its parts. If separable elements have entered into it (and I think that criticism can distinguish such elements up to a point) all have been stamped with the character that belongs to the Gospel as a whole. The reader who is familiar with some recent theories about sources, redactions, displacements and the like will be led to feel that such theories have sometimes been used to avoid, rather than to solve crucial difficulties of interpretation."<sup>(103)</sup>

Such criticism was deserved and it appears here that Dodd was arguing that this approach was a 'cul de sac'. Yet there was circularity in the course that Dodd proposed when he argued that "The problem of criticism resolves itself into the problem of interpretation."<sup>(104)</sup> How are we to know the essential stamp of the author's mind other than through his work, and how are we to decide what is his work other than through an interpretation of the essential stamp of his mind? Moreover, if Dodd's work set the course for much subsequent British Johannine criticism, no major British commentary since the beginning of the Second World War has

concerned itself with the theories that Dodd was criticising - nonetheless much recent American Johannine scholarship has returned to these issues with increased vigour and criticises any scholarship that does not concern itself with these questions. D.M. Smith has recently argued that these questions must have a place on the agenda of Johannine criticism.

In commending Hoskyns precisely because he did not evade difficulties by recourse to such theories, Dodd gave approval to the pattern he was to follow in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel". By way of coincidence Dodd was given the opportunity to come full circle with Strachan. Noting that in the early years of the century, "Many of us had hoped that along such lines (i.e. those put forward by Strachan in the first edition of "The Fourth Gospel; its Significance and Environment", 1917, and "The Fourth Evangelist: Dramatist or Historian?", 1925), the deadlock in Johannine studies might be broken,"<sup>(105)</sup> Dodd observed that the wheel of Johannine criticism had come full circle;

"The fact is that all these attempts at improving the order of the Fourth Gospel depend upon the preconceptions on the critic's part regarding the intention of the writer or writers responsible for the work as we have it; and these preconceptions often will not survive a closer examination of the actual text. In short... the conviction is emerging that the work as we have it is the product of one mind (with the possible exception of chapter 21 and a brief editorial note here and there) and that its order is the result of careful planning by the same mind (again with the possible exception of a few minor transpositions such as any ancient work is liable to suffer)."<sup>(106)</sup>

Thus the stage was set for the way in which Dodd dealt with the Fourth Gospel in his major work of Johannine interpretation. In that work and in the review cited above Dodd asserted "That the way to an understanding of his (the Evangelist's) profound and subtle mind often

lies through superficial or ostensible incongruities."<sup>(107)</sup> By way of a warning 'shot across the bows', Dodd warned that we have no right to expect any mind to be entirely self-consistent. Dodd, then, followed Strachan in turning back from the 'cul de sac'; his change of mind does not appear as radical as Strachan's, simply because he did not commit himself in print to any such theory. However, it is as radical a change of mind; he, who once welcomed such approaches, came to reject them. Two further points remain to be made. It would appear that he came to realise the circularity inherent in his suggestion in his Cambridge Inaugural Lecture,<sup>(108)</sup> The second point is to note that Dodd was also still aware of the problems of chapter 21, editorial notes and minor transpositions. Did he take them seriously enough? These are, naturally enough, the starting point for many current investigations into the history of the Fourth Gospel in a Johannine community. It would appear that Dodd did not give sufficient weight to these problems that still remained. This may well be readily understood if we place his Johannine studies in their context in Dodd's wider New Testament studies to which we briefly turn.

#### The Centripetal Approach to the New Testament.

This approach may clearly be seen developing in the period of his Cambridge Inaugural Lecture. Here, as he surveyed the scene, Dodd suggested ,

"That interpretation is the goal of our studies would no doubt have been recognised in all periods, and it has never been entirely neglected. But there have been times when students have felt obliged to deny themselves the satisfaction of handling it until the prior problems should have been elucidated. We are no longer in this position. Thanks to the labours of our predecessors we have enough accurate knowledge available, in the fields of textual criticism, higher criticism, background and language, to provide a starting point."<sup>(109)</sup>

He knew that there was still much work to do in these specialist fields, "But the point, I believe, has been reached at which our further progress, even in special fields, depends upon our treating them in direct relation to the overruling problem of interpretation."<sup>(110)</sup> Dodd knew that this would involve a change in direction in New Testament studies;

"The kind of interpretation that I have in mind will in one sense reverse the main direction in which New Testament studies moved for a century. Our principal aim has hitherto been to discriminate as clearly as possible between various books and strata, so as to isolate for intensive study the special problems connected with each part.....This process of analysis should now be balanced by a movement in the opposite direction."<sup>(111)</sup>

He was careful not to call this new movement 'Synthesis' "For that term might imply the imposition of unity upon originally disparate material. But the unity of the New Testament is original, underlying the diversity of the individual writings."<sup>(112)</sup> Thus Dodd argued that New Testament studies had reached the position where "The centrifugal movement needs to be balanced by a centripetal movement which will bring these ideas, now better understood in their individual character, into the unity of the life that had originally informed them."<sup>(113)</sup>

Within the context of Dodd's wider New Testament studies we can see a slightly earlier indication of this approach in "The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments", published in 1936 but based on lectures given in the Michaelmas term, 1935. To take one relevant example, Dodd argued that "The close affinity of the Fourth Gospel with the Apostolic Preaching will become plain if we attempt the analysis of it somewhat along the lines of our analysis of Mark."<sup>(114)</sup> The result was the recognition that "With all the diversity of the New Testament writings, they form a unity in their proclamation of the one Gospel."<sup>(115)</sup> He asserted here, too, the belief that "In the New Testament the unity is original",<sup>(116)</sup> and he offered exactly the same essential agenda for

While this approach was offered to the New Testament as a whole, and indeed specifically in the context of the importance of the Christ-event, it applies exactly to Dodd's understanding of the task confronting Johannine scholarship. That scholarship must also recognise an underlying and essential unity. The underlying unity is to be found in the Evangelist's profound and subtle understanding of the one Christian Gospel and precedes any sources or ideas that he might have employed. Johannine criticism is deficient if it cannot recognise and interpret that profound unity. Furthermore the Fourth Gospel can be understood only from within the New Testament, though this last point needs careful qualification. As he understood the task, Hoskyns had provided just such an example as Dodd was awaiting; Dodd described Hoskyns's commentary as "A brilliant example of the new tendency in New Testament interpretation which may be described as 'centripetal' over against the 'centrifugal' tendency which led to the study of its component parts.....In the introduction Hoskyns protests against this tendency, and in the commentary he has brought the whole New Testament into play for the elucidation of the Johannine text, with illuminating results." (118) "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" was another brilliant example of this tendency and for many reflects at its best this particular 'new look' in New Testament studies. A comparison of the indices of these two works makes one fact very clear; there is no doubt at all that Hoskyns makes far more references to the rest of the New Testament than does Dodd. This difference is so vast that in truth it is doubtful whether they can really be compared as examples of the same tendency. Indeed, Hoskyns's commentary is a far better example of the centripetal interpretation that Dodd wanted than what he was able to offer himself. Again this would appear to result from Dodd's understanding of the Evangelist as the 'Master Propagator' of Christianity to the Hellenistic World. Another comparison of the

indices of these works will indicate that Dodd, despite his enthusiasm for the centripetal approach, was not prepared to understand and interpret the Fourth Gospel from within the Christian/Biblical tradition. Hoskyns was. To put it differently, for Dodd the centripetal approach had to embrace, (my italics) also Greek philosophy and the higher religions of paganism. Hoskyns was more consistent than Dodd at this point. Dodd wanted to view the Fourth Gospel both as a part of the Biblical/Christian tradition yet he also wanted to see it in an organic relationship to Greek philosophy and the higher religions of paganism. Interestingly Dodd seems to have kept aloof from the Biblical Theology approach which was the logical outcome of the centripetal tendency.

#### The Background of the Fourth Gospel.

Dodd's understanding of the background of the Fourth Gospel reached its classical expression in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel". In this classical expression, this understanding was subjected to the scrutiny of fellow scholars. These will be considered in the chapter on "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel". However, Dodd's essential understanding of the background of the Fourth Gospel never changed. Thus his understanding will be outlined in this chapter.

The consistent sweep of Dodd's thought may be seen from three reviews; those of Bernard's commentary, Howard's "Christianity According to St. John" with Strachan's "The Fourth Gospel its Significance and Environment" and Brown's commentary. This affords the opportunity to see his position in the early years, 1929, the middle years, 1940, and at the end of his career in 1972. To see this 'sweep' quickly we note the most severe criticism of Bernard;

"The most serious limitation of the commentary, however, is its almost total neglect of the Hellenistic background....It is not enough to dismiss contemptuously (cf p356) the suggestion that the Evangelist drew upon such material as a source. The contempt may be justified. But his public stood in the full stream of



syncretistic thought, and the resemblances, even if they be thought superficial, could not be missed by the contemporary reader."<sup>(119)</sup>

There is, however, nothing on page 356 to justify this comment; there Bernard discussed the allegory of the Good Shepherd and referred to Philo's drawing a similar contrast between the Good Shepherd and one who allows his flock to wander, and concluded "The similarity does not go beyond what may naturally be observed between the words of two writers who are expounding the same image; there is no literary connexion to be traced between John 10 and Philo."<sup>(120)</sup> Maybe one should not make too much of this, but this judgement again indicates Dodd's impatience with Bernard, who was, after all, not ill-equipped for the task as Dodd set it forth; "The task of an interpreter of the Gospel is not achieved until he has defined in some way its relation to a widespread religious movement in which Jewish and pagan elements were already interfused, and which very quickly became aware of Christianity."<sup>(121)</sup> Bernard had already published a study on "The Odes of Solomon" in 1912. Dodd made an identical criticism of Hoskyns,<sup>(122)</sup> though in this review he observed that the Hellenistic background had been over-emphasised "By recent writers whose acquaintance with the vital Biblical and Christian background is superficial; but it remains true that converts from 'higher paganism' recognised that the Fourth Gospel spoke largely the language with which they were familiar."<sup>(123)</sup> To some extent a very elementary distinction between the background of the author and that of the first readers would have helped clarify the situation, for in the earlier years there was nothing in Dodd's understanding of the Fourth Gospel that demanded a Hellenistic background for the Fourth Evangelist. He did come to argue specifically for this. Noting that both Howard and Strachan did justice to the Jewish background of the Gospel and that Howard did full justice to the Hellenistic element, Dodd argued, "The fact is that the fusion of Hebraic and Hellenistic thought is extraordinarily complete in the Fourth Gospel....

Each sentence is apt to have more than one shade of meaning, according as it is approached from the Hebrew or Greek point of view; it has, so to speak, a stereoscopic depth of meaning."<sup>(124)</sup> That is the classical Doddian position. It is also to be found in his review of Brown's commentary. Here he argued that 'Jewish' and 'Hellenistic' are not mutually exclusive categories, and that elements from both cultures may be found in the Fourth Gospel. However, Dodd thought that Brown had significantly over-emphasised the 'Jewish' at the expense of the 'Hellenistic' <sup>(125)</sup> Whilst he agreed that Brown's "Demonstration, all the way through the commentary, of the deep Biblical roots of Johannine thought is impressive"<sup>(126)</sup>, he wondered whether Brown had recognised the full significance of his own demonstration of the indebtedness of Johannine thought to the sapiential tradition. He commented "It must be said, however, that it is just this Wisdom strain in the Old Testament which is least distinctively Hebraic; it is, as Brown shows, the most 'cosmopolitan' or 'ecumenical'."<sup>(127)</sup> Equally it might well be argued that it was precisely because this literature was so 'cosmopolitan' that the Fourth Evangelist (and maybe his first readers) would not have had to have that background knowledge of Greek philosophy and the higher religions of paganism that Dodd suggests. He went on to argue that "If we set the Fourth Gospel in its place in the canon as a whole, the features which plainly set it apart from the rest are surely not those based on the Old Testament, which is a part of the common heritage, but those which can be shown to have Hellenistic affinities."<sup>(128)</sup> Again he argued that it was the Hellenistic reader who would be attracted to the Fourth Gospel and that "The mainstream course of early Christian theology was (for good or ill) strongly Hellenized, and the Fourth Gospel was its inspiration more than any other canonical writing."<sup>(129)</sup> Even at this point it remains to be asked why Dodd failed to make the distinction between the background of the author and that of the readers.

Dodd knew it was wrong to start with the pre-supposition that

Jewish and Hellenistic influence should be opposed to each other.

This was clearly established by his own research in "The Bible and the Greeks".<sup>(130)</sup> Again it appears that Dodd's understanding of the Evangelist is the crucial factor in any discussion of the background of the Fourth Gospel. This was classically expressed in an analogy which he used on at least four occasions. It is to be found in his review of Brown, but more fully expressed in "The Fourth Gospel and Christian Worship".<sup>(131)</sup> Writing of the Logos, Dodd suggested "This means that we are concerned with something going far beyond a mere fusion of Hellenic and Hebraic ideas. Like Abt Vogler, who in his music made 'of three sounds not a fourth sound but a star', John has made out of the two hemispheres of thought and experience, joined in a single term, a new category to comprehend a new and unique fact."<sup>(132)</sup> The unique fact was the Incarnation.

Such is the consistent broad sweep of Dodd's thought and its classical expression. As we review its development it needs to be asked whether Dodd could (my italics) in fact do justice to the Hebraic element in this perfect fusion. This question must be asked because "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" climaxes a period in which Dodd argued for the necessity (my italics) of Greek thought for the expression of the Gospel. Moreover, as his review of Brown's commentary indicates, right at the end of his career Dodd still argued that the distinctive elements of the Fourth Gospel are Hellenistic rather than Hebraic.

We shall see this development in Dodd's thought by beginning with an examination of his position in the years 1935-36, and then briefly move to the early period, and in more detail to his later writings. In his Cambridge Inaugural Lecture Dodd observed that by the end of the nineteenth century "Our science moved from anatomy to ecology, the study of the organism in its habitat."<sup>(133)</sup> Although, as demonstrated earlier, Dodd did not see the continuation of this study as part of the

agenda for New Testament criticism, he was content with the results. As far as Dodd is concerned these results in this period are set out in "The Background of the Fourth Gospel."<sup>(134)</sup> These results may be set out in a series of propositions:

Firstly, the acknowledgement that the Fourth Gospel is unique so that any search for parallels may be dangerous<sup>(135)</sup> but nonetheless he asserted "Its thought is related to a context, and must be interpreted with reference to ideas which were familiar to the author and his first readers."<sup>(136)</sup>

Secondly, it is clear that the Gospel has a setting within primitive Christianity; "...the common Christianity of the first century does lie behind this Gospel, and...readers who were familiar with it... would find here much that was familiar, from which they could advance to its new and unfamiliar teaching."<sup>(137)</sup> Dodd was not sure whether the Gospel was written to confirm and nourish the faith of the Christian or to convert the religiously-questing citizen of the Greek world to the Christian faith. Although this ambiguity remains, there is no real doubt that Dodd instinctively thought that the Fourth Evangelist was writing for 'outsiders'; "It seems that he has composed his work in such a way that it could be read with understanding by those who had no more than a superficial acquaintance with Christianity."<sup>(138)</sup> As Dodd saw it, the Evangelist had to be aware not only of the needs of the Greek world, but also of the answers given by various philosophies and religions of that world. On the other hand, there is so much in the Fourth Gospel that can only be understood by one within the Christian tradition that one doubts whether conversion of the 'higher pagan' is the major aim of the Gospel. In passing, it is worth noting that Dodd thought of primitive Christianity as a much more homogeneous movement than, for example, did Bultmann. Here, too, in Dodd's thought there seems to be another indication

of that centripetal understanding that was a feature of his thought at this stage.

Thirdly, a setting is proposed within Rabbinic Judaism. It is significant that he placed this first in his consideration of the non-Christian background and argued that the Gospel "Could hardly be read without some knowledge of Judaism."<sup>(139)</sup> As is well known, the opening of "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" owes much to this article. It is significant that this setting in Rabbinic Judaism is not placed in such a prominent position in the later book. By the time of the publication of "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" Dodd seems to have been convinced that the swing towards the importance of the Jewish background of the Fourth Gospel had gone too far. In 1935, however, he seems to have implicitly accepted the growing tendency to see a much more significant Jewish background than had been thought at all likely in the early years of this century.

Fourthly, a setting within Greek philosophy and higher paganism is discussed. Dodd argued that "It is obvious that it (the Fourth Gospel) has an affinity with Platonic thought. It is not necessary to suppose that the Evangelist was acquainted with Plato's writings. The theory of a world of eternal forms, of which the phenomena are the shadows, reflections or symbols, had found wide acceptance, and in one form or another it reappears in almost all types of religious philosophy in the Hellenistic world. It seems clear that a theory of this kind underlines the Evangelist's use of symbolism, and assists his doctrine of the Incarnation and Sacraments."<sup>(140)</sup>

There is no doubt that Dodd valued Platonism both for its own sake and as part of the background of the Fourth Gospel. The Fourth Gospel also has points of contact with Higher Paganism; "In any case the affinities of thought and language between the

Fourth Gospel and some of the Hermetica are undeniable, and they are unlikely to be due (in most cases at any rate) to Christian influence upon pagan writers."<sup>(141)</sup> The Fourth Gospel and the Hermetica are addressed to a similar public. It is likely that Dodd did not give enough significance to the differences between the writings.<sup>(142)</sup> Again Dodd seems to have become more impressed by the significance of this background; in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" this setting is discussed first after the setting in primitive Christianity.

Fifthly, a setting within Hellenistic Judaism is proposed but this is not valued as highly as that setting within Greek philosophy and higher paganism.

Finally, some setting within Gnosticism is found, but here the differences are thought to be more significant than the similarities.

Within this article Dodd argued that if the Fourth Gospel were approached by way of the Synoptics, then "We are struck by those elements in it which seems to have little to do with the original Christian traditions, these elements which in fact turn out to belong to the Hellenistic environment; and we are disposed to think that Christianity is being obscured by alien speculation."<sup>(143)</sup> Yet if we approach it as the first readers, for whom these Greek ideas were pre-suppositions, might well have done, then what is unique about Christianity stands out. This is the Incarnation: "It was quite new to Hellenistic thought, and destined to transform it."<sup>(144)</sup>

In his Cambridge Inaugural Lecture, the same emphases as those noted above are to be found but also some timely warnings;

"Our commentaries have indeed been enriched with an astonishing assortment of 'parallels' diligently collected from every part of the Hellenistic underworld.....They are often adduced as evidence for the 'derivation' of this or that element in early Christianity

from Hellenistic sources of one kind or another....My impression, however, is that many such attempts so far have something hasty and premature about them. Their implied estimate of early Christianity as one more amalgam of half-digested ideas drawn from Hellenistic sources, with a larger contribution from popular Judaism than is usual in such an amalgam, is made possible only by an insufficiently critical treatment of the textual material, and by an inadequate comprehension of the character of the New Testament itself."<sup>(145)</sup>

Here he also warned against neglecting the Semitic factor in the New Testament generally.<sup>(146)</sup>

That in brief is the classical Doddian position. This position was outlined as early as 1926 in "The Gospel in the New Testament". Two years later in an argument which impressed Howard because it avoided the pitfalls of over-polarisation, Dodd wrote:

"The Gospel is in fact one of the most remarkable examples in all the literature of the period, of the profound inter-penetration of Greek and Semitic thought.....Nowhere more evidently than here does early Christianity take its place as the natural leader in new ways of thought, uniting in itself the main tendencies of the time, yet exercising its authority over them by virtue of the creative impulse proceeding from its Founder."<sup>(147)</sup>

In an era that had been content to describe the Fourth Gospel as the Gospel of Hellenism, Howard described Dodd's understanding as "That admirable characterization of the Gospel",<sup>(148)</sup> although he warned against letting the recently respectable interest in the Jewish background prove too much.<sup>(149)</sup> Yet it seems as early as 1928 that Dodd was stressing the importance of the Hellenistic contribution;

"Consciously the heir of the most powerful religious tradition in the ancient world, that of the Jews, it (the Christian Church)

found itself able also to interpret and even to incorporate the deepest elements in Hellenistic philosophy and religion....

The historian of Greek thought can trace a true continuity running through all its stages, in which the New Testament forms a vital link. It is in fact even more than the Septuagint a department of Hellenistic literature."<sup>(150)</sup>

It was in this period that he severely criticised Bernard for ignoring the Greek background of the Fourth Gospel and two years later explicitly emphasised that the Fourth Evangelist was the 'Master Propagator' of Christianity to the Greek world.<sup>(151)</sup>

Another fairly full discussion of the background of the Fourth Gospel may be found in "Present Tendencies in the Criticism of the Gospels" 1932. The distinctive feature of this discussion was that Dodd was prepared to take seriously the possibility of an Aramaic original behind the Fourth Gospel. In his review of Bernard's commentary he wrote, "Once again we have a competent Semitist refusing to accept Burney's alluring theory of an Aramaic original",<sup>(152)</sup> but three years later he was more complimentary. Even if he did not accept the thesis, he observed "But he (Burney) has compelled us all to admit that behind the Gospel in Greek, or behind portions of it, lies a mind that thought in Aramaic - the mind therefore of a Jew and not of a Greek."<sup>(153)</sup> Five years later as part of the evidence that the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle were written by different authors, Dodd argued that the Fourth Evangelist, unlike the author of the First Epistle, was bilingual.<sup>(154)</sup> Also in "Present Tendencies in the Criticism of the Gospels" Dodd again emphasised points of contact with Rabbinic Judaism and found a setting in Gnosticism here seen, with the Hermetic corpus being cited as evidence, as a pre-Christian movement.<sup>(155)</sup> While he did not accept the Mandaean theory as put forward by Bultmann, Dodd agreed that we must allow for the possibility that "There was in Christianity from its earliest times a strain of thought more closely akin to the gnostic movement than we have supposed



and that, though the Fourth Gospel itself may be a relatively late composition, it works with ideas which were not alien to early Christianity." (156)

Faced with a trend in the late thirties that was emphasising more the importance of the Jewish background of the Fourth Gospel, Dodd emphasised much more the Hellenistic part of the perfect fusion that is to be found in the Fourth Gospel. Much of this may be seen in his essay in the Harvard tercentenary volume, "Independence, Convergence and Borrowing in Institutions, Thought and Art", 1937. Dodd's essay was entitled, "Hellenism and Christianity". (157) The expected emphases are here but there are some advances towards the new Doddian emphasis. Certainly he continued to stress the perfect fusion (158) but he continued "When Christianity prevailed (over Neoplatonism), it did not mean the defeat of the Greek spirit. It meant that the Greek heritage was taken up into a larger, more inclusive context." (159) Moreover it is in this essay that we discover why, in Dodd's view, the perfect fusion was successful; "The attempt succeeds because it is made, not, as in the case of Philo (for example), directly in the interest of religious syncretism, but under the impulse of a powerful new experience which demands the resources of both Greek and Jewish thought to express it", (my italics).

(160) The Fourth Evangelist's indebtedness to Higher Paganism is spelt out; "If we read such Hermetic tractates as Poimandres, The Bowl, the Key of Hermes, and the De Regeneratione, we have before us the scheme upon which the Johannine conception of salvation is moulded (my italics)".

(161) This whole discourse is enriched because it is now possible to see it within the wider context of the Incarnation; "The age-long adventure of Greek thought proceeds, with richer data and in a larger universe of discourse." (162) Even if we take into account the title of the volume and the stress on the supreme importance of the Incarnation, there is little doubt that Dodd's thought has moved significantly. Here explicitly is the assertion that the full significance of the Christian Gospel cannot

be expressed without Greek thought, and that once it is so expressed, "The age-long adventure of Greek (sic) thought proceeds." What now of the Hebraic part of this perfect fusion? Inadequate or temporary would seem to be the descriptions required. In this volume we can see Dodd's own reconciliation of Greek and Hebraic thought, and the dominance of Greek thought inherent in Dodd's own position.

This was in 1937, but in 1938 there is more than a hint that Dodd did not totally accept this position himself. In short that there is a contradiction in Dodd's thinking. In "History and the Gospel" Dodd argued in a way that anticipated his later work, "According to the Scriptures". He wrote, "The study of testimony books has led to the conclusion that the application of prophecy was probably the earliest form of Christian theological thought."<sup>(163)</sup> In a footnote to that statement Dodd suggested "I would observe in passing that this fact determined once for all that Christian theology should preserve at bottom its Hebraic character, however widely Hellenistic categories might be used."<sup>(164)</sup> It is impossible to reconcile this position with that outlined immediately above, where much more than the mere expression of the Gospel is implied. There is some contradiction here; it is not trite to observe that Dodd was a Classicist before he became a Hebraist. Even in this period Dodd did not ignore the uniqueness of Christianity and the offence it caused the Greek world;

"It is possible, by sympathetically studying, say, the Hermetic writings, to put oneself temporarily into the position of those Greeks, and to feel just how foolish this 'word of the cross' must have sounded. It might be stated in Hellenistic terms, but it shattered the pre-suppositions of Hellenistic religion....A deeper appreciation of the background compels one to recognise the unity and uniqueness of the New Testament."<sup>(165)</sup>

Thus in an era in which the Jewish dimension of the Fourth Gospel was stressed, Dodd came to hold the view that Greek thought was necessary

for the full expression of the Gospel and that this full expression may be seen in the Fourth Gospel. Illustrating his own pre-dilection, Dodd overstressed this Hellenistic dimension. This became the definitive Doddian stance, held until the end of his career. Dodd knew that he was already out of step with the majority of Johannine scholars in this period.

Dodd's rather odd position within Johannine scholarship at this time may be illustrated from his review of Strachan's "The Fourth Gospel: its Significance and Environment" and Howard's "Christianity According to St. John". He acknowledged that both books stressed the importance of the Jewish background.<sup>(166)</sup> For example, whereas Dodd argued that the Logos had to be understood in both its Hebrew and Hellenistic background, both Howard and Strachan argued that it was primarily to be understood in terms of the Old Testament and the Sophia-Torah figure of Judaism. Dodd warned specifically against ignoring the Hellenistic aspect of Johannine thought,<sup>(167)</sup> but he also noted that neither Howard nor Strachan needed this warning; "Neither of these books leaves the Hellenistic element aside; Dr. Howard certainly does full justice to it."<sup>(168)</sup> This may, of course, be true for it is a value judgement, but it must not be allowed to conceal the fact that Howard's thought was moving in the opposite direction to Dodd's. Referring the reader to his earlier "The Fourth Gospel in recent Criticism and Interpretation" for matters of introduction, Howard noted "On one subject he feels that insufficient attention was then given to an important result of recognizing that the Johannine writings are essentially Jewish in their background and texture of thought."<sup>(169)</sup> Howard agreed that Hellenistic Judaism was "Becoming increasingly acclimatized in the world of Hellenism. But the more closely the Johannine writings are studied the more clearly does the Jewish character of both language and thought stand out."<sup>(170)</sup> In additional Note "A" he cited H. Pribnow's "Die Johanneische Anschauung vom 'Leben'", 1934, which demonstrated "That a whole group of terms are missing in the Johannine writings which are exceedingly common in the contemporary

literature of the Hellenistic world, and which might seem to come inevitably into the vocabulary of a writer whose cardinal conception is 'life'." (171) Especially one might add in one whose work is to express the Gospel in a way that the Hellenistic world might respond to it.

Dodd's review failed to comment on this argument which was damaging to his thesis; he merely repeats the thesis. (172) The review is not, as such, a 'review'; it is a survey of Johannine studies as Dodd saw it and a re-affirmation of his position. When Dodd directed attention to Howard's statement about the essential Jewish character of the Johannine writings it was specifically in the context of the debate between them about the authorship of the First Epistle. Dodd argued that Howard's thesis could not be applied "To the Epistle, which is perhaps the least Jewish of all the New Testament writings, and one of the most deeply affected by Hellenistic influences." (173) Thus implicitly Howard's case in respect of identical authorship fell. One reason why Dodd's work on the Johannine epistles is so dated is that apparently he has no knowledge of sectarian Judaism. Dodd's review of Howard is hardly satisfactory.

Dodd argued that Strachan had not done as full justice to the Hellenistic element as Howard. If this is a fair verdict, it was certainly not Strachan's intention, for he asserted "An attempt will be made in this chapter (chapter V, The Environment of the Gospel) to analyse the atmosphere of religious thought that prevailed in the Graeco-Roman world, particularly in Asia Minor when the Fourth Gospel was published." (174) Strachan placed the Fourth Gospel in the same period as Dodd; 90-110 A.D. Thus Strachan set himself the same task as Dodd. Their conclusions were radically different. Whereas Dodd argued that the religious quest of the ancient world was not in vain and that there were many points of contact between the Fourth Gospel and the religious and philosophical traditions of the Hellenistic world, Strachan affirmed "There was little in their doctrinal position which could afford common

ground with the Christian faith."<sup>(175)</sup> The difference is fundamental; "The Jesus of the Fourth Gospel is presented as drawing to Himself all the best thought in the contemporary world, and also as largely antagonistic to it."<sup>(176)</sup> We have seen that Dodd had argued that Christianity was destined to challenge many of the pre-suppositions of Greek thought and indeed, to transform them. Yet Strachan, emphasising the note of hostility to be found in the Fourth Gospel, argued that there was a fundamental incompatibility. He continued by emphasising the Jewish character of the Gospel; "Yet our study will show how essentially Jewish is the basis of all (my italics) the Evangelist's interpretation of the Christian faith,"<sup>(177)</sup> and "The writer is clearly a Jew of Palestine, and both his language and thought are cast in a Jewish mould."<sup>(178)</sup>

Strachan's discussion of the background of the Fourth Gospel follows as naturally his understanding of the purpose of the Gospel as Dodd's understanding follows his. Strachan argued that the Gospel was written for Christians, and within the Gospel we may discern the polemic of the Christian mission against Dispersion Judaism, although "Side by side, however, with this polemical strain, there appears a strong sense that Judaism and Christianity are closely related."<sup>(179)</sup> Here is a view of the purpose of the Fourth Gospel utterly unlike Dodd's in this period. That it is closer to the current prevailing opinion is beside the point. Dodd, however, did not appear to consider it necessary to draw the reader's attention to an opinion so at variance with his own understanding of the purpose of the Gospel. This is similar to the weakness of this review already noted, and again shows Dodd not willing to comment on such a different opinion.

Strachan did not ignore the wider background.<sup>(180)</sup> When he turned to this wider environment it was to Stoicism and not to Platonism that he turned. It was to a 'popular' Stoicism;

"It ought to be distinctly understood at the outset, that when we speak of Stoicism as part of the environment of the Fourth Gospel,

we are not speaking of a merely academic system. Academic systems of thought, at least those that are as tenacious of life as Stoicism, gradually permeate into the regions of popular thought, and ordinary men begin to talk and think more or less unconsciously in terms of them. It is in this sense that the Gospel may be said to have any relation to Stoic thought."<sup>(181)</sup>

Thus 'popular' Stoicism is substituted in place of Dodd's 'popular' Platonism. Significantly the Fourth Gospel is opposed to such Stoicism; "These aspects, then, of human freedom and deliverance from fear, so strongly emphasized in this Gospel, can only be regarded as developed in opposition to some such environment as we have attempted here."<sup>(182)</sup> Yet again Dodd did not find it necessary to draw the reader's attention to a view so unlike his own; he simply re-stated his view.<sup>(183)</sup> Like Dodd, Strachan held that Christianity could not be indebted to the mystery religions because of the historical reality of the Incarnation.<sup>(184)</sup> Here, too, he held common ground with Dodd but, unlike Dodd, Strachan argued that the Hermetic writings came from a mystery religions sect and warned against seeing any significant indebtedness to them.<sup>(185)</sup>

Here, then, in brief compass we may see similarities and essential differences between Dodd and Strachan. The differences are more significant than the similarities even if Strachan's picture of the Fourth Evangelist is wider than he admitted for he is one who has sufficient knowledge to attack Gnosticism, the mystery religions and 'popular' Stoicism.<sup>(186)</sup> The work of Howard and Strachan indicate a tendency in Johannine studies that was other than Dodd's. In his review, Dodd did not attempt to argue with these works; in fact he seems to have ignored their case, and this underscores the impression that so much of Dodd's Johannine study was carried out within a school of one, his own. At this time he was emphasising the importance of the Hellenistic background of the Fourth Gospel and did not attempt to do justice to the stress that these two scholars placed on the Jewish background. At times he interpreted

that stress, as though it were identical to his own.

Exactly the same Doddian position was held until the end of his career. This might easily be seen in his commentary on the Johannine Epistles where he argued that his "Interpretation....has in large measure emerged from studies primarily directed towards the understanding of the Fourth Gospel in its contemporary setting."<sup>(187)</sup> This interpretation flowered in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" By this time Dodd again acknowledged that he was out of step. This may be seen in "According to the Scriptures", 1952;

"It is certainly true that the development of Christian theology was profoundly influenced by the religious thought of Hellenism, and it cannot be questioned that this influence was already at work in the New Testament, notably in some parts of the Pauline Epistles, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and in the Fourth Gospel. I see no reason to regret this, or to make any such attempts to minimise it as are often made at this present time.....I am not among those who deplore their (Origen, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas) influence, nor am I persuaded by those who tell us that the great task of theologians of this generation is to purge Christianity of the last dregs of Platonism."<sup>(188)</sup>

Dodd continued to hold this stance to the end; as will be argued, he never came to terms with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The same comment that he made of Bernard's alleged refusal to consider the Hellenistic background of the Fourth Gospel might more aptly be made of Dodd's mentioning the Dead Sea Scrolls in only six places in "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel",<sup>(189)</sup>

At the same time as he was tenaciously holding to this definitive stance about the background and purpose of the Fourth Gospel, Dodd was recovering an ancient source, with Southern Palestinian connections, behind the Fourth Gospel. As will be argued, his understanding of the Evangelist's relationship to that tradition is so unsatisfactory,

precisly because he could not change his definitive stance. It is not unreasonable to suggest that Dodd could not adapt to the implications of his later work simply because he could not change his picture of the Evangelist.



### Summary.

This chapter has demonstrated where Dodd stood on critical matters throughout his long career. For the most part he has not changed his mind. In respect of date and authorship there has been no significant movement. Throughout there has been an emphasis on Christianity as an historical religion. Similarly, Dodd has maintained there is some ancient independent historical tradition behind the Fourth Gospel. He consistently understood the Evangelist as the 'Master Propagator' of Christianity to the Hellenistic world. He found in the Fourth Gospel a theological maturity, which, while this was never explicitly stated, seemed to demand a comparatively late date.

On certain issues Dodd changed his mind, sometimes radically. Perhaps the most important was his understanding of the extent of the ancient tradition, and its use for a reconstruction of the life and teaching of Jesus. This involved him in a radical re-assessment of the relationship of the Fourth Gospel to the Synoptics. Similarly, he came to reject theories of partition, redaction and textual displacement. There has been some movement in his understanding of the Evangelist's indebtedness to Paul. At the end of his discussion in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel", Dodd argued that any influence was minimal.

While Dodd enjoyed a reputation for being prepared to change his mind, in essentials the Doddian stance has not changed. More seriously, in reviews, Dodd did not grapple with, or even direct his readers' attention to, ideas which challenged his own position.

References - Chapter II.

1. In The Proceedings of the British Academy, volume LX, 1974  
G.B. Caird asserts "When Dodd first turned his mind to what he called 'the Johannine problem', he planned to write a trilogy on the Fourth Gospel, but in the end he succeeded only in writing the first two books....The third volume was to have been the commentary", page 11f. He suggests that Dodd's work in the preparation of the N.E.B. might well have prevented him completing the commentary. In fact it appears as though Dodd never got very far. His literary executor, Professor C.F.D. Moule, has assured me in a conversation that no evidence for the commentary exists.
2. Dodd, The Gospel according to John, a review article, Ampleforth Review, 1972, cited Review of Brown, this quotation from page 22.
3. Dodd, Present Tendencies, p.250, the same point was made in his Cambridge Inaugural Lecture, p.27f.
4. This is one of the differentiating characteristics of the 'New Look' at the Fourth Gospel.
5. Dodd, Apostolic Preaching, p.181; it was made elsewhere, for example in his essay, The history and doctrine of the Apostolic Age, in T.W. Manson A companion to the Bible, 1939, p.417.
6. Dodd, Bible and Background, p.90. In History and the Gospel he argued that the writing of the Gospels covered the period from Nero to Trajan.
7. Dodd in The Manchester Guardian of 13th November, 1935.
8. J.A.T. Robinson, Redating, citing a letter from Dodd written on 19th June, 1972, this is included as an 'Envoi' on p.359f.
9. Ibid. p.359.
10. Ibid. p.360.
11. e.g. H.T.F.G., p.424.
12. Dodd, Founder, p.33f, "It was brought out, in all probability, not far from A.D. 100, possibly on the earlier side".
13. Dodd, The Gospel in the New Testament, National Sunday School Union, 1926, p.75.
14. Ibid, p.75.
15. cf Dodd, Interpretation, p.5, where, having noted that a case could be made out for either Alexandria or Antioch, he argued "I assume here that the tradition which associates the Fourth Gospel with Ephesus is to be accepted".
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. The assertion of the Ephesian origin of the Fourth Gospel is something of a commonplace in H.T.F.G., e.g. 243, 246, 300, 426f. This particular quotation from p.243.

18. (Contd) If this particular example is not contentious, others are; an example is the assertion on p.120, "but I doubt very much whether a writer whose work we must place late in the first century and in a Hellenistic environment, could have invented such a persuasive account of a trial conducted under conditions which had long passed away".
19. Dodd, Review of Bernard, p.370.
20. cf Ibid, where Dodd noted "To others it will hardly carry conviction".
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. cf Bernard Commentary, p.cix.
24. Dodd, Review of Bernard, p.370.
25. cf Ibid, p.371, where he concluded his review with the words "We still need a good modern commentary on the Gospel according to John".
26. Dodd, Interpretation, p.449f.
27. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.16.
28. Ibid. p.17, interestingly he repeated his assertion that the question of authorship is not considered so important now with the interesting addition "For the problem of historicity", p.27.
29. cf R.E. Brown, Commentary, pp.xxxiv-xxxix; Stage one is the existence of a body of traditional material; stage two is its development into Johannine patterns; stage three is the first edition of the gospel; stage four is the second edition and stage five a final redaction by someone other than the evangelist. Although the Apostle is obviously connected with stage one, Brown asserts the strength of his influence in stages two to four even though it was a disciple who actually wrote the Gospel in its present form.
30. Dodd, Review of Brown, p.19.
31. cf Brown, Commentary, p.cii where he argues that the Apostle John's relationship to his disciples was much closer than that of Peter to Mark and, while he does not want to limit the disciple's role to that of a secretary, the disciple's outlook clearly reflects that of his master.
32. Dodd, Review of Brown, p.19.
33. Ibid.
34. Dodd, The Close, Expositor, 8th series, xxii, 1921, pp.273-91.
35. Ibid, p.288.
36. Ibid, p.273.
37. Ibid. p.281.
38. B.H. Streeter, The Four Gospels, a study of origins, Macmillan, 1924, (all citations from ninth impression, 1956), p.399f.
39. Ibid, p.400.

40. R.H. Strachan, The Fourth Gospel, its significance and environment, S.C.M., third revised and rewritten edition, 1941, p.27.
41. Dodd, The Close, p.284.
42. Dodd, Present Tendencies, Exp. Tim., XLIII, 1931-32, pp.246-51.
43. Ibid, p.249, The first advance was to recognise how different the picture of the life and teaching of Jesus presented in the Fourth Gospel is & that the Synoptic Gospels must from a historical point of view be regarded as primary, and the Fourth Gospel secondary.
44. K.E. Kirk, The study of Theology, Hodder and Stoughton, 1939; Dodd's essay was entitled The New Testament, pp.219-46.
45. Ibid. p.229.
46. of Ibid, where the question is "Was the author acquainted with any or all of the Synoptic Gospels?"
47. Dodd, The Gospels as history, a reconsideration, B.J.R.L., XXII, 1938, pp.122-43, where he asserted that the Gospel of Mark was the basis of all the others.
48. T.W. Manson, A companion to the Bible, T. & T. Clark, 1939; Dodd's contribution was called The life and teaching of Jesus Christ, pp.367-89.
49. Dodd, History and the Gospel, Nisbet, 1938, p.80.
50. Ibid.
51. Dodd, Review of Strachan, J.T.S., XLIV, 1943, pp.206-12.
52. Ibid, p.212.
53. Ibid, p.211.
54. R.H. Strachan, The Fourth Gospel, its significance and environment, p.28.
55. Among the examples cited are the anointing and the feeding miracle; the theory approximates to that of R.E. Brown's fifth stage in the composition of the Gospel.
56. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.8.
57. Dodd, About the Gospels, C.U.P., 1949, p.40.
58. Dodd, Interpretation, p.449, where there is another appreciative reference to the work of Gardner-Smith.
59. Dodd, According to the Scriptures, Nisbet, 1952.
60. Dodd, The dialogue form in the Gospels, B.J.R.L., XXXVII, 1954, pp.54-67.
61. Ibid, p.65, where the alternative possibility canvassed was that John knew the Synoptic dialogue form and changed it radically.
62. Dodd, 'Herrenworte', N.T.S., 2, 1955-56, pp.75-86.

63. Ibid. p.86.
64. To these we shall turn in another context; they include "The appearance of the risen Christ: an essay in form criticism" in "Studies in the Gospels" edited by D.E. Nineham, Blackwell, 1955; "A l'arrière-plan d'un dialogue Johannique", *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses*, 37, 1957, reprinted in "More New Testament studies", M.U.P., 1968, pp.41-57, from which all citations are taken; "Une parabole cachée dans le quatrième Evangile" in *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses*, 42, 1962; all citations from English version "A hidden parable in the Fourth Gospel" in "More New Testament Studies", finally "The prophecy of Caiaphas: John 11.47-53" in "Neotestamentica et Patristica" edited by W.C. van Unnik, 1962.
65. Dodd, Review of Brown, p.19; a conspicuous example of an 'influential scholar' is, of course, C.K. Barrett, a pupil of Dodd.
66. Dodd, Review of Bernard, p.370.
67. Dodd, The Gospel in the New Testament, p.100.
68. Dodd, Authority, p.228f; see also Bible Background, p.75 where he wrote "I should say myself that historically this Gospel stands below the others, and I should always go to them first if I wanted mere facts" and Present Tendencies, p.250. "The fact is whether it was written by John or by another person of the same name (to recall a pleasantry of Harnack), we know pretty well what sort of book it is with which we are dealing. It is not an historical work, even in the sense in which the Synoptics are historical works. Yet it embodies elements of good historical tradition - much more than nineteenth century liberal criticism would have allowed. But this historical material is placed at the service of a definite theory of the meaning of Christianity".
69. Dodd, Background, B.J.R.L., XIX, 1935, pp.329-43, p.331f. On the same page he wrote, "The fact is that the Fourth Gospel belongs only in a limited sense to the same class as the Synoptics. In some important aspects it belongs to a quite different class of literature. Its true context is only partially that which it shares with the other Gospels".
70. Dodd, About the Gospels, p.51.
71. cf. Interpretation, p.444; "It will have become clear that I regard the Fourth Gospel as being in its essential character a theological work, rather than a history". But it is also a Christian work so that".....the narrative is for the author much more than a dramatic vehicle for his ideas. His aim....is to set forth the knowledge of God contained in the Christian revelation. But this revelation is distinctively, and nowhere more clearly than in the Fourth Gospel, an historical revelation. It follows that it is important for the evangelist that what he narrates happened".
72. Dodd, Review of Bernard, p.371.
73. Ibid. p.371.
74. Ibid.
75. Dodd, Miracles in the Gospels, Exp. Tim., XLIV, 1932-33, pp.504-09.
76. Ibid. p.506.

77. e.g. smaller crowd, others with loaves who were induced to share or "Perhaps the influence of His words made them feel satisfied with a very small share for each".
78. Dodd, Miracles in the Gospels, p.506.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid, p.507.
81. Ibid. p.509.
82. Bernard, Commentary, p.lxxxvi.
83. Dodd, The Gospel in the New Testament, p.100.
84. Dodd, Authority, p.xvii; the discussion continues from pp.133-90. Dillistone refers discerningly to Dodd's own experience in a worshipping community in his section The Authority of Corporate Experience, in C.H. Dodd, Interpreter of the New Testament.
85. Dodd, Present Tendencies, p.251.
86. Ibid. p.249.
87. Ibid.
88. Dodd, Background, p.331.
89. Ibid. Exactly the same points as those mentioned above were made in The history and doctrine of the Apostolic age, in T.W. Manson's A companion to the Bible.
90. Dodd, Present Tendencies, p.248.
91. cf. Ibid, where he remarked "At the end of the century, in fact, the rival views confronted one another in a kind of trench warfare which promised no decision". A horrific description for a generation that knew the First World War at first hand.
92. Ibid.
93. As Dodd saw it at this time, this was more important than either linguistic or textual study of the Fourth Gospel; see Review of Bernard, p.369.
94. Dodd, Review of Bernard, p.370.
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid.
97. cf Ibid.
98. Dodd, Present Tendencies, p.249.
99. Dodd, Inaugural, p.23.
100. Ibid.
101. Ibid. p.25f.
102. Ibid, p.27.

103. Dodd, Review of Hoskyns, p.306.
104. Dodd, Inaugural, p.27.
105. Dodd, Review of Strachan, p.206f.
106. Ibid, p.207f.
107. Ibid. p.208.
108. See fn104 and 106 above.
109. Dodd, Inaugural, p.30.
110. Ibid.
111. Ibid, p.31.
112. Ibid. p.31f.
113. Ibid, p.35.
114. Dodd, Apostolic Preaching, p.165.
115. Ibid, p.177.
116. Ibid, p.178.
117. cf. Ibid, where he wrote "The present task of New Testament criticism, as it seems to me, is the task of synthesis. Perhaps, however, 'synthesis' is not quite the right word, for it may imply the creation of unity out of originally diverse elements. But in the New Testament the unity is original".
118. Dodd, Review of Hoskyns, p.306.
119. Dodd, Review of Bernard, p.371.
120. Bernard, Commentary, p.356.
121. Dodd, Review of Bernard, p.371.
122. cf. Dodd, Review of Hoskyns, p.307.
123. Ibid.
124. Dodd, Review of Strachan, p.209f.
125. cf. Dodd, Review of Brown, p.22.
126. Ibid.
127. Ibid.
128. Ibid.
129. Ibid.
130. Dodd, The Bible and the Greeks, Hodder and Stoughton, 1935.
131. Dodd, Prologue in Studies in the Fourth Gospel, edited by F.L. Cross, Mowbrays, 1957.

132. Ibid. p.12; the following details are provided in The Oxford Companion to Music - Vogler Georg Joseph, known as Abt Vogler. Born in 1749, died in 1814, "A tireless experimenter in acoustics and inventor of instrumental devices, weaver of harmonic theory, organist, composer, teacher and author...Half a century after his death Browning so idealized him in a poem that he is now immortal".
133. Dodd, Inaugural, p.13.
134. Dodd, Background, pp.329-43.
135. cf. Ibid, p.331. "The thought of the Gospel is indeed so original and creative that a search for its 'sources' or even for 'parallels' by which it may have been affected, may easily lead us astray".
136. Ibid.
137. Ibid. p.332.
138. Ibid, cf. also Ibid, 331. "We ought not perhaps to lay too great a stress on the use of the present rather than aorist tenses of the verbs (in 20.31), but at least we may say that while the aorist ~~πιστεωσθε~~ would necessarily imply that the readers did not so far hold the Christian faith, the present πιστευετε does not exclude readers who were already Christians and whom the writer wished to confirm in their faith by giving it a richer content". On p.333 Dodd accounted for the absence of an account of the Institution of the Eucharist partly in terms of the disciplina arcani.
139. Ibid. p.334.
140. Ibid, p.337.
141. Ibid, p.338.
142. An example of one who has scrutinized Dodd at this point is Smalley, cf. his John, p.49.
143. Background, p.338.
144. Ibid, where he argued "From this central idea the whole scheme of Johannine thought proceeds and by it the conceptions he derives from non-Christian sources are remoulded into a Christian theology". This applies as much to Dodd's theology as that of the Fourth Evangelist.
145. Dodd, Inaugural, p.14ff; a similar warning is given in Apostolic Preaching, p.179 and his Review of Hoskyns, p.309.
146. Ibid. p.18f.
147. Dodd, Authority, p.200f.
148. Howard, Fourth Gospel, p.173.
149. Ibid.
150. Dodd, Authority, p.197f.
151. Dodd, Bible and background, p.74.
152. Dodd, Review of Bernard, p.369.



153. Dodd, Present tendencies, p.249.
154. Dodd, 1. J.F.G., B.J.R.L., XXI, 1937, pp.129-56, see p.137 where again he did not accept Burney's theory but agreed that the Aramaic colouring of the Gospel suggests that "It seems probable that the Gospel is the work of a bilingual writer". This was something of a vintage period for the discussion of the language of the Fourth Gospel. A very well balanced discussion was provided by M. Burrows in J.B.L., 49, 1930. "The original language of the Gospel of John". He too, thought that Burney and Torrey had overplayed their hand but came down in favour of an Aramaic original.
155. Dodd, Present tendencies, p.249.
156. Ibid, p.250.
157. Dodd, Hellenism and Christianity, in Independence, Convergence and Borrowings in Institutions, Thought and Art, C.U.P., 1937.
158. cf. Ibid, p.221. "In recent criticism there has been something of a reaction from the earlier view of the Fourth Gospel as a Hellenised version of Christianity. This reaction is so far justified, that John uses an idiom which is coloured by Aramaic, and that he shows a deep acquaintance with the doctrines and usages of the Jewish religion as well as with the original Jewish formulation of the Christian Gospel in eschatological forms. But he has perceived that these terms are no longer adequate....What we have here is a strikingly successful attempt to make an harmonious and unified whole out of elements of Jewish and Hellenistic thought".
159. Ibid, p.107.
160. Ibid, p.126.
161. Ibid, p.127.
162. Ibid, p.131.
163. Dodd, History and the Gospels, p.60.
164. Ibid.
165. Dodd, The study of Theology, p.238. In his writings of this period Dodd held to the position outlined in the body of the text; e.g. In "The study of Theology, p.234, he wrote "If we conclude that the Fourth Evangelist was by origin a Palestinian Jew, we must suppose that at some time he had acquired a Hellenistic outlook". In Manson's A companion to the Bible, Dodd argued that the Fourth Gospel was the most thoroughgoing attempt at the reinterpretation of Christianity in terms of Hellenistic thought. It was a singularly successful attempt but the Fourth Evangelist was also familiar with Jewish thought. "John's presentation has the profundity of a great philosophical thinker, the universality of one who has passed beyond the distinction of Jew and Greek", p.415. This might also be seen as a fair verdict on Dodd's own thought.
166. cf. Dodd, Review of Strachan, p.209, where he wrote "There is a further point in which these two books taken together effectively illustrate the present tendency in Johannine studies. In contrast to the exclusive attention to the Hellenistic background which was common in the earlier years of this century, both Dr. Strachan and Dr. Howard emphasize the importance of the Jewish background".

167. cf. Ibid, where he wrote "Indeed thw Hellenistic aspect of Johannine thought is of greater importance than some writers, in reaction against the earlier views, are ready to admit".
168. Ibid.
169. W.F. Howard, Christianity, Duckworth, 1943, p.5, which is part of the preface, where he referred to the discussion of critical issues in his earlier work. This is the only issue on which Howard felt it necessary to comment.
170. Ibid, p.30.
171. Ibid. p.196.
172. cf. Dodd, Review of Strachan, p.209f.
173. Ibid, p.211.
174. Strachan, The Fourth Gospel: its significance and environment, p.47.
175. Ibid.
176. Ibid.
177. Ibid.
178. Ibid, p.50.
179. Ibid, here too, Strachan argued that "In this Gospel the Judaism portrayed, on the basis of the recorded controversies of Jesus with Jewish opponents, reflects the polemic of the Christian mission against Diaspora Judaism." He anticipated the position of J.L. Martyn in History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel: "There is, however, no evidence that the Fourth Evangelist ever merely transcribes the traditional material with which he works. He is not concerned merely to give verbatim discourses delivered in these ancient synagogues. These dialogues and discourses with Jewish opponents must also reflect the situation, when the earliest Christian preachers met their opponents in the synagogues of the Diaspora in Ephesus and elsewhere in Asia Minor", p.23.
180. cf. Ibid, p.96; "No doubt the Evangelist's mind has an outlook on contemporary ideas of the Logos, but it is rooted in the Jewish conception of the Word of God".
181. Ibid, p.53.
182. Ibid, p.70.
183. cf. Dodd, Review of Strachan, p.210.
184. cf. Strachan, The Fourth Gospel: its significance and environment p.77, "One of the chief reasons why Christianity triumphed over the mystery-religions, and why it did not need to borrow anything essential from them was that the Founder of the Christian Church was an actual historical personality" and, acknowledging a debt to Dodd's History and the Gospel, chapter three, argued that John's "Theological interpretation is more to him than even the mere facts and sayings by themselves; for it has been created by the facts themselves not imposed upon them", p.37.

185. cf. Ibid. p.77, where he argued that Judaism had been influenced by both Oriental and Greek thought and that the Hermetic writings had been influenced by Jewish ideas (here he noted an indebtedness to Dodd's The Bible and the Greeks) and warned that any links with the Hermetic writings "Are due to the influence of a common source in Judaism".
186. cf. Ibid. pp38, 50 and 53 for the polemic Gnosticism.
187. Dodd, Commentary, Hodder and Stoughton, 1946, these words are from the preface. On page XX he wrote "The religious quest of the Hellenistic world was not in vain. It attained some genuine religious insight; and it provided early Christian thinkers with an intellectual apparatus for interpreting Christianity to the wider world, and, in doing so, penetrating more deeply ( my italics ) into the meaning of the Gospel". Moreover, whereas in the Pastorals, Ephesians and Colossians we can see problems that sometimes occurred when this happened, this is not so of the Fourth Gospel "In which alien categories are mastered and transformed by the Gospel", p.XVII.
188. Dodd, According to the Scriptures, Nisbet, 1952, p.136.
189. cf. Dodd H.T.F.G., pp. 15, 180, 253, 263, 289, 300. The last four are from the discussion of John the Baptist. The 'keynote' is sounded on p.15 where Dodd discounts the possibility of any significant influence from Qumran.

### Chapter III.

#### The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel.

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The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel.

"The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" was published in 1953, it was to have been part of a trilogy. Seventeen years after he had announced that the understanding of the Fourth Gospel was the 'yardstick' by which his generation of New Testament scholars would be assessed, Dodd published his first massive work on the Fourth Gospel. As we have seen in the previous chapter, for many years Dodd concerned himself with the Fourth Gospel, and much of that early work finds classical expression here. Nonetheless, it seems that Dodd was recognised as a Johannine scholar only after this work was published. Whilst one must not over-emphasise this fact, A.M. Hunter in his "Interpreting the New Testament 1900-50" does not mention Dodd in his section of the Fourth Gospel. On the other hand, a good many reviewers noted that Dodd's great work was the product of many years' work.<sup>(1)</sup>

Our intention firstly, is to place this work in its Doddian context. There is no doubt that it fulfils many of the expectations aroused in his Cambridge Inaugural Lecture, and is the classical expression of the belief firmly held that the major task of Johannine studies was that of interpretation. Secondly, to place the work in its context in British scholarship, and thirdly, to assess its impact upon that scholarship as shown in reviews.

In order to place this work in its context in British scholarship it is to be compared, where appropriate, with Howard's "Christianity according to St. John", 1943, the commentaries of E.C. Hoskyns, 1940, and C.K. Barrett, 1955, and J.N. Saunders "The Fourth Gospel in the Early Church".<sup>(2)</sup> It has been argued earlier that much of Dodd's work is characterised by an absence of citations from other scholars. This may easily be tabulated as follows:-

	<u>Interpretation</u>	<u>Howard</u>	<u>Barrett</u>
Bernard	0	9	21
Bultmann	7	9	30
Hoskyns	0	0	18
Howard	0	-	49
Strachan	0	-	3

There is difficulty in evaluating this evidence, but Dodd had reviewed the commentaries of Bernard and Hoskyns, Howard's "Christianity according to St. John", and Strachan's "The Fourth Gospel: its Significance and Environment".<sup>(3)</sup> As his career came to its zenith. Dodd was apparently not that concerned with the arguments and discussions of fellow scholars; they, on the other hand, were certainly influenced by his work, much of which is heavily indebted to this doyen of British Johannine scholarship.

#### Overview.

Dodd outlined the purpose of the book; "The scope of this book is restricted to the attempt to establish some general principles and lines of direction for the interpretation of the Fourth Gospel."<sup>(4)</sup> The work is divided into three parts, yet these parts are inter-dependent, and go to make up one carefully and powerfully developed argument. It is not, as such, a commentary. There were those who explicitly welcomed this fact; "But this (the attempt to establish some general principles) is the greatest service anyone can render to those who approach the study of this Gospel; it is really of far greater value than a detailed verse by verse commentary, and it may be said at once that Dodd has succeeded in what he set himself to do. This new map of the interior will be indispensable to all future explorers of the heights and depths which still lie undiscovered in the celestial and yet terrestrial regions of those twenty-one chapters of such seemingly artless language."<sup>(5)</sup>

Dodd argued that throughout the whole Gospel the reader "Finds it

impossible to satisfy himself regarding the meaning of the text without raising prior questions involving the whole universe of discourse, within which, the thought of the Gospel moves....Thus in the study of this Gospel, exegesis of the text, and interpretation in the wider sense, are inter-dependent to an unusual degree."<sup>(6)</sup> Thus, the first one-hundred and thirty pages are, to use Dodd's image, occupied with the taking of 'soundings' in the various possible backgrounds. Part two of the book is entitled "Leading Ideas"; this discussion covers some one-hundred and fifty pages. F.N. Davey was very impressed by this section;

"This, in its turn, might at first sight be taken for the block of 'detached notes' familiar in modern commentaries. It is something very different: a very carefully articulated study covering, by means of one method of analysis, what will be covered again, by another method of analysis in part three....Dr. Dodd makes this part a single integrated study. Gerhard Kittel once said that the task for British theologians was neither to translate, nor yet to try to emulate the Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, but to move forward to the next stage. Dr. Dodd's treatment of these Leading Ideas suggests that the next stage might well consist in the examination of interrelated themes, unconfined by the sometimes artificial limitations of a dictionary treatment, but disciplined by the realistic boundaries of their combination in a single document or corpus of documents."<sup>(7)</sup>

Part Three is called "Argument and Structure": this, which is indeed neither commentary nor paraphrase, covers the next one-hundred and fifty four pages. Davey described it well, "It is a detailed and documented exposition of the author's mind and design, as revealed in the Gospel which lies before us".<sup>(8)</sup> The work ends with a comparatively short appendix of some eleven pages dealing with the historical aspect.

This work was exceptionally well received in scholarly circles. It is no exaggeration to say that never before has a book been so well

received by so many. This may be briefly illustrated from some reviews: "There can be little doubt that this is Dodd's magnum opus - not, maybe his most seminal and stimulating volume but certainly, in point of mere erudition and mature scholarship, his greatest achievement."<sup>(9)</sup> W. Grossouw, citing P. Winter, "It was not without reason that it has been typified as a book 'such as only one is written in a country in the course of a generation'".<sup>(10)</sup> R. Bultmann in a major review, which was in parts critical, noted that it was "The result of an epoch of research, to which the author himself has made outstanding contributions",<sup>(11)</sup> and in a word described the book as "brilliant".<sup>(12)</sup> J.J. Collins continued the praise, "A new book of such proportions from the pen of Professor Dodd is an event of prime importance in the biblical field, and readers will not be disappointed."<sup>(13)</sup> Similar value judgements were passed by many scholars.<sup>(14)</sup>

There was almost universal regret about the appendix; typical of the value judgements are these:- "At the end is added a rather sketchy appendix on the historical aspect of the Gospel,"<sup>(15)</sup> and "The appendix on the historical aspect of the Gospel is evidently an afterthought, and one that might well have been omitted."<sup>(16)</sup> Yet Dodd's own published work had led the scholarly world to believe that this aspect was important and that he would address himself to it; in the fullness of time, he did. Whilst there were those who were satisfied with the appendix<sup>(17)</sup> there is no doubt that it is of less value than the rest of the book. It also indicates that a great scholar could not write a book at this era in Johannine studies without paying at least minimal attention to the problem, although Bultmann was totally correct in his assertion that "The interpretation is not governed by the desire to make use of the Gospel of John as a source for the historical life of Jesus."<sup>(18)</sup> Within a year of the publication of this work Dodd was indeed recovering and describing the independent Johannine strain of the tradition, and making use of it in a reconstruction of the life of Jesus.<sup>(19)</sup> "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" climaxes what might be called the earlier Doddian stance on the Fourth



Gospel, whereas "The Founder of Christianity" building on "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" represents a later stance. There are few indications that Dodd adapted the early stance to meet the requirements of the later, and indeed in his commentary he would have had no alternative but to wrestle with the implications of the tensions inherent in his two major works of Johannine scholarship.

Our discussion will continue by examining the major points of "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel". Where these accord with the Doddian stances outlined in chapter two, the purpose is to see how British scholarship reacted to their classical expression. There will be a case study of the "Knowledge of God" to illustrate Dodd's essential method in part two, and an overview of part three.

### "The Universe of Discourse"

In his revision of Howard's "The Fourth Gospel in recent Criticism and Interpretation", Barrett compared the work of Bultmann, Dodd and Hoskyns:

"Hoskyns begins with the biblical world and Christian tradition and never moves outside that field. Professor Dodd - significantly - begins his book with an account of 'The Background' and interprets the Gospel as an attempt to communicate the Christian Message to the outside world. Dr. Bultmann goes further still, and believes that material of non-Christian origin was incorporated into the Gospel, though he believes that it was 'Christianised' in the process, and adapted to its new, biblical environment."<sup>(20)</sup>

These were the three significant possibilities facing Johannine scholars at this time. Nineham rightly criticised Hoskyns arguing that his attempt was an effort at 'by passing' the whole problem "Interpreting the author's words without discovering exactly the context of discourse in which he used them, or even assuming that there is a New Testament context of discourse which is the same for all writers, so that the meaning of the

words for the Fourth Evangelist can be determined from their meaning for other New Testament writers."<sup>(21)</sup> This is also a major weakness of the centripetal approach urged by Dodd. We have argued that Hoskyns's commentary was a far more thorough-going example of this than "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" and, as Nineham correctly argues, demonstrates its fundamental weakness.

There is, however, an inherent difficulty in establishing the universe of discourse. Nineham puts it well; "The right thought-forms for the interpretation of the text can be derived only from the text itself and yet they are needed for the proper understanding of the text"<sup>(22)</sup> Nineham thought that by isolating and facing the problem Dodd was able to put forward a method for solving it; herein is "One of the major contributions of the book."<sup>(23)</sup> Dodd followed the course outlined in his Cambridge Inaugural lecture, but again the problem was to do justice - as Dodd would certainly want to - to the uniqueness of Christianity or avoiding what Nineham has called the "Error of the religionsgeschichtliche Schule"<sup>(24)</sup>; "It is not just a matter of examining the Fourth Evangelist's use of a particular phrase and then saying that since its use has close affinities with its use in one or more contemporary religious systems, they will give us the context of discourse in which the Johannine use is properly understood."<sup>(25)</sup> Pursuing his understanding of the ideal interpreter, Dodd recognised that "Even a unique use of terms rests on previous usage."<sup>(26)</sup> Thus, to continue to use Nineham's words, Dodd has argued that a "Writer chooses such and such a word or phrase to express his unprecedented meaning because something in its previous use makes it specially suitable for his purpose, and we shall not fully understand his new usage of it unless we know just what it was in its previous usage that made him choose it."<sup>(27)</sup> This may be so, but there is an implicit pre-supposition here too. Dodd thought of the Fourth Evangelist as a missionary and it is necessary that a missionary begins where his listeners are. Moreover, as both Dodd and Hoskyns insisted

the Fourth Evangelist was a member of the primitive church so that the language of early church was an important factor in determining his choice and use of terms. He was also a citizen of the Graeco-Roman world and the really important question is, how much of John's language is to be explained in terms of the vocabulary of the primitive church. It is an open question whether he owed as much to Hellenism as Dodd suggests. Moreover, the besetting weakness of much biblical criticism at this time was its insistent stress on the difference between Greek and Hebrew thought. A weakness in Dodd's criticism was his failure to take the Dead Sea Scrolls seriously, thus indicating his own preference for Hellenistic rather than Hebraic thought.<sup>(28)</sup> On Nineham's terms, Dodd's methodology was superior to Hoskyns's but a prior understanding of the Gospel and Evangelist are the major reasons for this.

From another prior understanding Dodd's methodology seems suspect. This was the period in which the Hebraic background of the Fourth Gospel was being stressed.<sup>(29)</sup> Thus McCool saw rightly that Dodd's work "Implicitly rejects the modern view which would interpret John exclusively in terms of Palestinian Judaism and primitive Christianity and very definitely turns back to the period when greater weight was placed on Hellenistic influences."<sup>(30)</sup> Dodd had never followed this line and the majority of reviewers accepted his position. Nineham argued that;

"One thing stands out; the examination of Greek religious ideas in the first section of the book pays rich dividends in the second section. Professor Dodd is no blind Hellenist in his interpretations, but again and again it becomes clear that to ignore the Greek background of the Johannine words is to miss a great deal of what the Evangelist meant by them."<sup>(31)</sup>

Dodd's conclusion must be cited at length;

"While the evangelist stands within the general environment of primitive Christianity, and may in some measure have been influenced

by Paul, he also shows affinities with certain tendencies in non-Christian thought. He is well aware of the teaching of Rabbinic Judaism, but only partly sympathetic to it. He is more sympathetically in touch with Hellenistic Judaism as represented by Philo. Like Philo himself, he is in contact with the higher pagan thought of the time, as represented to us by the Hermetic literature. 'Gnosticism' has in part the same roots as Johannine Christianity, and serves in some measure to illustrate Johannine conceptions, but more by contrast than affinity. Mandaism turns out to be too late in date to be of any direct importance for our investigations, though in so far as it retains elements of earlier Gnosticism it may afford some illustrative parallels. Rabbinic Judaism, Philo and the Hermetica remain our most direct source for the background of thought, and in each case the distinctive character of Johannine Christianity is brought out by observing the transformation wrought in ideas which it holds in common with other forms of religion."<sup>(32)</sup>

Whilst Bruce contended that "The first (part) gives a wonderfully concise and scholarly survey of the variegated background against which the Evangelist wrote",<sup>(33)</sup> Barton was not impressed, suggesting that "The net result of the investigation is not impressive"<sup>(34)</sup> and that Dodd had vastly overrated the influence of the Hermetic literature which was too late to have influenced the Fourth Evangelist.

Both Dodd and Bultmann sought to establish the universe of Discourse. In a recent article, Kysar has examined their attempts in regard to the Prologue and noted that only twenty of three-hundred and twenty citations of primary literature are held in common. We conflate his tables for the sake of convenience.<sup>(35)</sup>

References.Distribution of references.

<u>Literature</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Common</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Dodd</u>		<u>Bultmann</u>	
				<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Old Testament	66	3	4	26	19	40	21
Classical	8	0	0	1	0.75	7	3
Apocryphal	64	12	18	17	12	47	25
Pseudepigraphical	22	0	0	0	0	22	11
Rabbinic	12	0	0	10	7	2	1
Hermetic	26	3	11	23	17	3	1
Philonic	58	2	3	51	38	7	3
Sub-apostolic	40	0	0	1	0.75	39	20
Odes of Solomon and miscellaneous	24	0	0	3	2	21	11

Despite Kysar's skill in recovering these citations and presenting evidence in table form, it is still difficult to draw precise conclusions. His comparison is justified and it illustrates that, although both scholars attempt essentially the same task, they produce very different accounts of the universe of discourse. Problems still remain in the use of Kysar's tables; for example, they may be significant if there is only one possible relevant referent. In the case of Dodd there is an obvious connection between the number of citations and his suggestion that Philonic, Rabbinic and Hermetic literature supply the essential background for the Prologue. There is also a tendency in Dodd's work for there to be an inclusive approach to the discussion of the background. Kysar has clearly seen this; "He (Dodd) does not choose to say that the background for the passage lies alone in that body of literature which can clarify the most unusual and difficult parts of the passage....but in a combination (my italics) of all the background material found to have useful affinities to the passage."<sup>(36)</sup> It appears that the centripetal approach is applied to the whole of the background and not just to the interpretation of the Gospel.

In this perceptive article, Kysar went on to make four criticisms of Bultmann and Dodd and concluded that New Testament scholars still require more precise historical methods to enable them to successfully undertake the task that these two great scholars attempted. Kysar argued that their appeals to extra-New Testament evidence were so vastly different that their methodology was open to question. In our view these appeals were the result of pre-suppositions that each brought to the problem. A further weakness is that both cite later literature - Dodd accepts that the Hermetica was written in the second and third centuries - whilst Bultmann uses sub-apostolic literature and the Odes of Solomon accepting that it was written down later than the Fourth Gospel - as evidence for a 'thought form' that in its earlier oral form influenced the Fourth Evangelist. Finally, neither scholar apparently refers to primary sources in their discussion on the Rabbinic influence both being dependent upon H.L. Strack and P. Billerbeck "Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch." Both scholars acknowledge this dependence, but this is a marked deficiency in Dodd when he has claimed that precisely this background is one of the key factors in understanding the Prologue specifically, and the Fourth Gospel generally. (37)

"The Universe of Discourse" - the Hermetic Literature.

Within part one, Dodd devotes twice as much space to the Hermetic literature as to any other background. In the index locorum there are an impressive number of references, more than to any other single source other than the Gospel of John. In fact, they total approximately the same as the total number of references to all the Synoptic Gospels. A good number of reviewers doubted whether there was any justification for citing the Corpus Hermeticum. In that this reservation was connected with date, Dodd tried to pre-empt the criticism, arguing that the oldest were not that much later, and that "The type of religious thought they represent can be traced to an earlier period. In particular, its essentials seem to be pre-supposed in Philo, for while the non-Hebraic strain in Philo's thought often recalls the Hermetica quite strikingly, I can find no grounds for concluding that they were directly influenced by Philo."<sup>(38)</sup> There were other scholars who welcomed this concentration on the Hermetica; M.S. Enslin may be taken as typical, "To me personally his full and careful survey of the Hermetic literature was one of the most rewarding and instructive sections of the book."<sup>(39)</sup> There was no doubt that scholars recognised that they were reading the work of an expert in the field. This reputation was established by "The Bible and the Greeks", 1935. Without undervaluing previous studies on the Hermetica, there is little doubt that English-speaking scholars were for the first time able to react to an extensive study of the relationship between the Fourth Gospel and the Hermetica. In the English-speaking world, Dodd's was the first truly significant study. Dodd found in that literature, as well as in the Fourth Gospel, the fusion of the Hebraic and the Hellenistic. Dodd's position in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" was to emphasise the value of the Hermetica. This may be seen by placing in table form the order in which he dealt with the various areas of thought.

The Background of the Fourth  
Gospel, 1935

Setting in early Christianity  
Rabbinic Judaism  
  
Greek philosophy and Higher  
Paganism  
  
Hellenistic Judaism  
  
Gnosticism

The Interpretation of the Fourth  
Gospel, 1953

Setting in early Christianity  
Higher religion of Hellenism,  
Hermetica  
  
Hellenistic Judaism  
  
Rabbinic Judaism  
  
Gnosticism  
  
Mandaism

In the later discussion the Hermetica is dealt within its own right and placed in its position of priority as Dodd saw it. This judgement is not derived solely from its position in the table, but in the total context of Dodd's use of the Hermetica for understanding the universe of discourse of the Fourth Evangelist. In this he was certainly going against the tide of critical opinion, although that tide had been influenced by the then recent insistence on the essential Hebraic nature of the Fourth Gospel.

What must be borne in mind here is that Dodd has never claimed that the Fourth Gospel was indebted to the Hermetica. "There is no book, either in the New Testament or outside it, which is really like (my italics) the Fourth Gospel. Nevertheless, its thought implies a certain background of ideas with which the author could assume his readers to be familiar."<sup>(40)</sup> Thus all that is being claimed is, that

"We are to think of the work as addressed to a wide public consisting primarily of devout and thoughtful persons...in the varied and cosmopolitan society of a great Hellenistic city such as Ephesus under the Roman Empire. In what follows I propose to take soundings here and there in the religious literature of that time and region, with a view to reconstructing in some measure the background of thought which the Evangelist presupposed in his readers."<sup>(41)</sup> In his insistence that the Fourth



Gospel was not indebted to the Hermetica, Dodd echoed the position of Estlin Carpenter;

"With some common religious terminology, and corresponding appeals to analogous phases of inner experience, the Hermetica and the Fourth Gospel seem wholly independent. Each makes its own contribution to the spiritual life of its age in its own form. Each seeks the knowledge of God, and each finds it in a communion opened to the soul from the divine side by an act of grace. The Greek mystic realises it through Nature, the Christian through Christ."<sup>(42)</sup>

A similar point was made by M.E. Lyman for whom the differences were more significant than the similarities.<sup>(43)</sup> Dodd was, as we have seen, not unaware of these differences. One of the decisive problems here is when is a similarity a parallel? When is an identical expression of an idea within the fairly limited confines of religious vocabulary an indebtedness? It might be fairly argued that the absence of a group of terms is more significant than those held in common. As we have seen in Howard's "Christianity According to St. John", Dodd was made aware of Pribnow's contention that four such important words from the Hermetica are absent in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>(44)</sup>

Three years after the publication of "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" Dodd was pressed on this point by G.D. Kilpatrick. Both Dodd and Kilpatrick lectured to The Fourth Theology and Ministry Convention, 1956. Kilpatrick's lecture was entitled "The Religious Background of the Fourth Gospel." He noted that Dodd had done much to draw attention to the Hermetica and that

"In his recent book, 'The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel', he draws largely, though not exclusively, on them for the understanding of John. Again, as with Philo, there are many obvious resemblances in ideas and the words used to express them, and many scholars have gladly followed Professor Dodd in using the Hermetica as one of the main tools of interpretation."<sup>(45)</sup>

Kilpatrick was not convinced;

"It is surprising, for example, that to understand this book (The Fourth Gospel) we are asked to turn so often to the religious and philosophical ideas of contemporary paganism rather than to the Bible and first-century Judaism. That the suggestion is surprising is no reason for thinking it wrong, nor yet for excepting it from examination."<sup>(46)</sup>

He proposed to examine it by a comparison of the vocabularies of the Hermetica and the Septuagint with that of the Fourth Gospel. He knew that this would not be conclusive; "Such a comparison would not settle the matter but would provide a strong indication in which direction to look for the interpretation of John."<sup>(47)</sup> Thus we have, as it were, another 'sounding' proposed.

Kilpatrick began his enquiry by examining a few important terms from the Hermetica which had already penetrated Hellenistic Judaism. He was impressed by the absence from the Fourth Gospel of such words as *ἀθανασία*, *γνώσις*, *δημιουργός* and *μυστήριον*. To this he added a comparison of Ferguson's index in Scott's edition with the vocabulary of the Fourth Gospel and noted the absence of significant terms. He concluded "Thus the results of our first examination of some important terms in the Hermetica are unfavourable to the view which sees these texts as part of the background of the Gospel."<sup>(48)</sup> The examination continued by taking alpha to delta as a basis for a comparison of the vocabulary of the Fourth Gospel with that of the Hermetica and Septuagint. For the Fourth Gospel, once proper names, particles and prepositions have been excluded, he has a list of one-hundred and ninety seven words. Eighty-two are common to the Fourth Gospel and the Hermetica (some 40%) whereas one-hundred and ninety one are common to the Fourth Gospel and the Septuagint;

"We may conclude that in all essentials the vocabulary of John and the Septuagint are identical for alpha to delta. This identity

stands in marked contrast to the relation of this part of John's vocabulary to the Hermetica. With the Hermetica John's vocabulary has surprisingly little contact if they share a common religious outlook."<sup>(49)</sup>

Kilpatrick noted the two obvious limitations of this comparison; the count was restricted to the initial four letters of the alphabet, and secondly, "For an exact estimate we must weigh our words as well as count them."<sup>(50)</sup>

For Kilpatrick the emergence of the Septuagint was decisive;

"It is clear, however, that this translation is the principal monument of a migration, the migration of a religion and theology from one language to another. It must be recognised that in making this migration Judaism underwent the influence of the Greek language and the Greek world. This influence was, however, less than the effect of Jewish scriptures on the Greek language. It was in effect the creation of a new religious vocabulary in Greek."<sup>(51)</sup>

For Kilpatrick the Fourth Gospel is "Part of a movement of Biblical and Jewish religion into the Greek world."<sup>(52)</sup> Thus there can be no surprise that its language is the language of the Septuagint, nor indeed, that the essential background of the Gospel is the Biblical religion. He saw the matter utterly differently from Dodd; "Further, John represents a stage in the invasion of Hellenistic paganism by Judaism, and later, by Christianity, and not the invasion of Biblical religion by the pagan world."<sup>(53)</sup> Kilpatrick knew of Jewish documents that had made some use of the language of Hellenistic religion; he cited the "Prayer of Asenath", but this could not be said of the Fourth Gospel, and he concluded that the Hermetic literature is no part of the background of the Fourth Gospel.

Kilpatrick raised here some important issues which Dodd had ignored. The most important of these is. the availability of a language, based on

the Septuagint, to do precisely what Dodd thought the Fourth Evangelist intended. In Kilpatrick's word count, there was no word common to the Fourth Gospel and the Hermetica that was not also to be found in the Septuagint. In 1970 Kilpatrick returned to this investigation. This study confirmed the results of the earlier one. In it he compared John's vocabulary, again from alpha to delta, with that of Josephus and Philo finding that 85% of John's vocabulary is to be found in Josephus and 65% in Philo, thus affording two distinct groups, those of the Septuagint and Josephus on the one hand, and the Hermetica and Philo on the other. The peculiarity is, of course, that Josephus is very rarely considered in a study of the background of the Fourth Gospel. Kilpatrick again affirmed that the essential identity of language was with the Septuagint. In terms of Greek style it is roundly affirmed that John's was of the lowest level in the New Testament. Thus, "In Greek terms he was uneducated with no contact with the Greek religions and philosophical literature of his day."<sup>(54)</sup> Finally, Kilpatrick argues that it is to the Septuagint, to the Dead Sea Scrolls, Rabbinic texts and especially to the traditions of the Tannaim that we must go for the Fourth Evangelist's universe of discourse. Whilst Kilpatrick is correct in reminding us that what was hitherto associated with Hellenistic Judaism was not unknown and without influence in Palestinian Judaism of the first century, it is difficult to see how the Fourth Evangelist, as Kilpatrick envisages him, (as a poor man from a poor province) was so open to the influence of the Septuagint and Josephus. Having made this point, there is no doubt that Dodd did not adequately grapple with the problems posed by Kilpatrick which had been anticipated to a large degree by Pribnow in 1934. As Kysar has argued, there is still a need for more precise methods for the discovery of the universe of discourse. So often a picture of the Fourth Evangelist precedes any such enquiry, although it is a merit of Kilpatrick's treatment that is based on an examination of the vocabularies of the relevant literature, but it is not at all clear that he

weighed the words, as well as counted them, nor indeed that he had adequate criteria for an examination of the Fourth Evangelist's Greek style. Interestingly, it might well be the case that Kilpatrick supports Dodd's affirmation that the Fourth Gospel depends ultimately upon an ancient Palestinian tradition. There seems little in Kilpatrick's methodology that would enable him to distinguish between the Greek of the Fourth Evangelist and the Greek of the tradition he employed. He argued that, like Mark, the Fourth Evangelist's first language was Aramaic.

Dodd's own position concerning the Hermetica seems a little confused. On occasions he argues that it was simply part of the background thought of the readers of the Fourth Gospel.<sup>(55)</sup> On other occasions he argues that it was part of the Evangelist's own background; "It seems clear that as a whole they (the Hermetic writings) represent a type of religious thought akin to one side of Johannine thought, without any substantial borrowings on the one part or the other."<sup>(56)</sup> We have already argued that a very simple distinction between the background of the readers and that of the Evangelist would have assisted Dodd's discussion, but because Dodd spends so much space discussing the background in Hermetic thought the implication is that this is the most significant background. Moreover, the space devoted to the discussion can only be justified if it is part of the significant background thought of the Evangelist. Most scholars in their discussion of Dodd's work at this point assumed that he was arguing that the thought of the Evangelist was influenced by the Hermetica. In this particular, Dodd has not generally been followed by subsequent scholars. Within thirteen years of the publication of "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel", R.E. Brown, in an article in which he

"Evaluated the suggestions that have survived the scholarly criticism of the intervening years", maintained "In our judgment the Scrolls consistently offer better parallels to John than do any of the non-Christian elements in the Mandaean documents emphasised by Bultmann or the examples in Philo and the Hermetics offered by Dodd."<sup>(57)</sup>

A balanced judgement has been offered by Lindars; after a twenty-one line discussion of the Hermetic literature, he concludes "It is not necessary to go outside Christian sources to account for John's ideas, but it may well be that John echoes this kind of language (that of the Hermetica) at this point for the benefit of readers to whom it is meaningful to speak in this way about the religious quest."<sup>(58)</sup> The major problem in the pursuit of the universe of discourse is that, in the absence of any precise method for its recovery, an understanding of the background and purpose of the Fourth Gospel precedes that pursuit. This was certainly so in the case of Dodd. There is also the imprecise use of 'parallel' and again in the case of Dodd the use of imprecise phrases like 'akin to Johannine thought'.

"The Universe of Discourse" - Was Dodd Consistent?

"The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" is, in some sense, obviously a unity, but there does appear to be a significant difference between the first two parts and the third. Of the second part, Hooke rightly comments with

"Regard to the stock of images upon which the symbolism of the Gospel rests, it is interesting to observe that while the images or symbols discussed in this section are used in the Hermetic literature, in Philo and by Gnostic writers, they are all ultimately derived from the Old Testament.....The parallels assembled by Professor Dodd with such wealth of learning are profoundly interesting, as he himself says, by way of contrast; but they played no part in the living development of which we have spoken" (their being transformed in Christ).<sup>(59)</sup>

Moreover, very little use is made of such parallels in part three, in this part the only significant use of them is in the discussion of the form of chapter 17.<sup>(60)</sup> Kysar has detected a significant shift of emphasis between "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel", 1953, and "The Prologue to the Fourth Gospel and Christian Worship", 1957, given to the same audience

as Kilpatrick's lecture discussed on page 98ff. Kysar suggests

"Dodd's masterpiece, 'The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel', published some four years before the article, 'The Prologue of the Fourth Gospel and Christian Worship', does not so much emphasise the Old Testament references in the Prologue....(whereas) the later contention of Dodd's in favour of an Old Testament reference in the Prologue pre-supposes a conception of the unity of salvation History." (61)

Classically, Dodd has never been without a conception of the unity of salvation history. Moreover, the short lecture is simply too short to compare with "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel". Indeed, whilst there are only two citations from the *Hermetica*, Dodd apparently has not changed his stance in this lecture; "That the Fourth Evangelist, aware as I believe him to have been of the Hellenic implications of the term *λογος*, also felt in it the whole weight of the Hebrew-prophetic experience of 'hearing the Word of the Lord', cannot be doubted." (62)

It is impossible to subject the whole of part one to this sort of detailed analysis. We turn now to part two for which the Knowledge of God will be taken as a 'case study'. We will then return to part one in the light of this discussion to ask further questions of Dodd's understanding.

Interestingly, Dodd begins his discussion with reference to Bultmann's article in the "Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament". In broad terms he accepted Bultmann's account of the difference between the Hebraic and Greek conceptions of 'Knowledge';

"Accordingly, for the Greek, to know God means to contemplate the ultimate reality,  $\tau\omicron\ \delta\omicron\nu\tau\omega\varsigma\ \delta\epsilon\upsilon$ , in its changeless essence. For the Hebrew, to know God is to acknowledge Him in His works and to respond to His claims. While for the Greek knowledge of God is the most highly abstract form of pure contemplation, for the Hebrew it is essentially intercourse with God; it is to experience His dealings with men in time, and to hear and obey His commands." (63)

Dodd began to part company with Bultman early in the discussion. Whilst the Septuagint translates  $\gamma\ \tau\epsilon$  by  $\gamma\upsilon\nu\omega\sigma\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$ , it is not an exact equivalent; "This word cannot reproduce the precise connotation of the Hebrew original, with all its aura of association. To the Greek reader it inevitably suggests the ideas which he is accustomed to attach to it." (64) Yet, and this is the first major difference between Dodd and Bultmann who insisted on a rigid difference between the Greek and Hebrew meanings, the word does undergo some modification, since the Greek meaning is affected by the Hebraic context; "The term  $\gamma\upsilon\nu\omega\sigma\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$  is enlarging its territory, and the determination of its precise connotation in any particular place is a matter of the delicate appreciation of the values of the context... This delicate discrimination of varieties of meaning over an expanding field of connotation is called for in Johannine interpretation." (65)

To briefly turn to those areas discussed in part one, we find that "For the Hermetists, saving knowledge is a discipline of cosmological, anthropological and theological speculation culminating in the mystical vision, which is at the same time deification." (66) This is a movement



"Away from the Greek conception of knowledge in the direction of the Hebrew, from pure contemplation to experience, an experience in which God and man are in active intercourse."<sup>(67)</sup> In typical Gnostic usage

is the believer's knowledge of the "Realm of being which transcends all human experience....communicated in terms of mythology."<sup>(68)</sup>

In Philo we are confronted by the Hellenisation of Judaism; ".... *γνωσις* is attained through the understanding of the divine revelation given in Holy Scripture, it is on the one hand awareness of pure being....and on the other it has the quality of communion with God through faith and love."<sup>(69)</sup>

Dodd continued by directing our "Attention to the remarkable resemblances between certain Johannine expressions and the teaching of the Old Testament in Greek dress."<sup>(70)</sup> When he wrote of "Ignorance of God as failure to acknowledge Him by invocation or worship"<sup>(71)</sup>, Dodd argued that many examples of the accusations of those who "do not know God" reflect a prophetic note. With specific reference to 8.54 "It reiterates the language of the prophets, and, like them, contemplates a knowledge of God which is acknowledgement of His righteous will in action."<sup>(72)</sup> Dodd also maintained that throughout chapters 7 and 8 of the Fourth Gospel there is both an Hebraic and Greek content to *γνωσις* the quotation immediately above continued "....and yet includes within it the idea of knowledge as pure apprehension of truth or reality, as liberating power, and as sharing of the divine nature; an idea which is not properly Hebraic, but belongs rather to the main tendency of Hellenistic religion."<sup>(73)</sup>

The Fourth Gospel speaks of both God's knowledge of man and of man's knowledge of God. In both, Christ, the Logos, is central. In the former, to use Kysar's summary, "Ideas associated with the prophetic writings seem always to be just below the surface in the Fourth Gospel. When Jesus speaks of himself as known by God, it is analogous to the divine knowledge of the prophets."<sup>(74)</sup> This is also true in the latter

case, but there is a 'realised element' about this;

"He means that through the incarnation of the Logos, consummated in His death, knowledge and vision of God were brought to men as never before. He is speaking of an historical fulfilment of the historical expectation of Israel expressed by the prophets; of the 'new covenant' under which all shall know God, from the least to the greatest. Here, in its 'realised eschatology', the Fourth Gospel stands apart from its Jewish and Hellenistic predecessors and analogues, and firmly within its Christian setting."<sup>(75)</sup>

We close this summary by noting that knowledge of God is totally Christocentric; "....knowledge of God in the Johannine sense either takes the form of knowledge of Christ or is dependent upon a knowledge of Christ."<sup>(76)</sup>

The whole Doddian thesis depends upon a delicate fusion of Hebraic and Greek ideas with Christian experience being the vitalising energy. This amalgam enabled the Fourth Evangelist to be the 'Master Propagator' of Christianity to the Greek world. It is serious then to read "That the evangelist was not conscious of a duality in his thought we may probably assume."<sup>(77)</sup> How could such a one produce this "New category to comprehend a new and unique fact?"<sup>(78)</sup> Moreover, in this discussion, Dodd seems well aware of the similarities with the Septuagint.<sup>(79)</sup> Has he done justice to these or has he still clung to the importance of the Hermetica? Whilst there are Greek associations to 'Knowledge' in the Fourth Gospel, as Dodd has accurately characterised the Hebraic understanding of that term, it appears as though basically it is an Hebraic concept of the Knowledge of God that is to be found within the Fourth Gospel.<sup>(80)</sup> Again, it would appear that Dodd has brought a prior understanding of the Evangelist and his Gospel to his reconstruction of the universe of discourse and his understanding of this leading theme of the Gospel.

"The Universe of Discourse" - The Background and Purpose  
of the Fourth Gospel.

Dodd's position throughout his career has already been discussed. We return to this consideration here to examine the reaction of reviewers to its classical expression in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel". It has been maintained in this chapter that this understanding is decisive in this book. Problems of background for Dodd are clearly seen within an understanding of the purpose of the Gospel.

Here, Dodd argued that primarily the Gospel was intended for the non-Christian public of a great Greek city like Ephesus.<sup>(81)</sup> The classical reservation was neatly put by Nineham; "The Gospel seems too instinct with Christian sentiment and allusion, too unintelligible to the non-Christian, to have been intended primarily for non-Christian readers."<sup>(82)</sup> It is perhaps too easy to suggest that Dodd is somewhat inconsistent; he maintained that the Gospel has behind it the common Christianity of the period, "And that readers who shared (my italics) the life and thought of the church would find here much that was familiar, from which they could advance to its new and unfamiliar teaching."<sup>(83)</sup> It is indeed hard to find anything with which they could be unfamiliar if they were Christians who lived in Ephesus, heirs to both the wider Greek culture and the Christian tradition. Particularly so when Dodd assumes that primitive Christianity was homogeneous. Later in the book Dodd suggested a mixed public, "The evangelist appears to have deliberately exercised reserve about the Christian sacraments in writing for a public which included pagans whom he wished to influence towards the Christian faith."<sup>(84)</sup> Elsewhere yet a different readership seems in mind; "It would seem that the evangelist was conscious of putting forward a bold re-interpretation of what was believed to be the teaching of Jesus."<sup>(85)</sup> Although the point will be discussed in more detail later, it is necessary to note here that of chapter 9 he wrote, "There are therefore in the narrative several indications of the author's acquaintance with Jewish ideas and practices."

It may well be that he wrote with recollections in his mind of such proceedings against the Mimim in his own time."<sup>(86)</sup> Davey asked, "Could such a carefully, and successfully, integrated work as the Fourth Gospel really have been composed as at one and the same time an apology for non-Christians and a deepening and recasting of the Gospel for Christian?"<sup>(87)</sup> To ask the question, is to answer it. There is much to be said for Davey's suggestion that "The evangelist was recounting the traditional story of the life and words and actions and death of Jesus in such a way as to show the significance these events would have had for the ideal spirit-illuminated Christian believer, had such a one been present to observe them."<sup>(88)</sup> A not dissimilar view is proposed by Howard with his understanding of John's three theological aims, the explicative, the mandatory and the proleptic.<sup>(89)</sup> Both these scholars argue that the Fourth Gospel was intended primarily for the believer.

Dodd was questioned on another front by Hooke; "The question presents itself whether at this stage of the Church's history a Christian writer would have addressed himself on such a subject as the inner meaning of the incarnation to any audience but a Christian one. The age of Apologists had hardly arrived, unless we are to consider this treatise as its precursor."<sup>(90)</sup> He also argued that, if the intention of the Fourth Evangelist were as Dodd suggested, he was out of character with other early documents addressed to Christian circles in Asia Minor (Colossians, the Johannine Epistles, the Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia and the Ignatian Letters); "It is difficult to see in these writings traces of any friendly attitude towards the climate of thought which Professor Dodd finds characteristic of the Hermetica."<sup>(91)</sup> Hooke's questions are indeed pertinent, and made more so by Dodd's own understanding of the vital significance of the Incarnation and homogeneous nature of early Christianity.

Dodd's understanding is open to serious question. Of course, there may not be a single purpose for the Gospel, and to suggest more than one

is no sign of the inherent weakness of an argument. Yet there is presumably a primary purpose. It is suggested that Dodd's understanding of this primary purpose is incorrect. Even if it may be correctly argued that Dodd does not wish to exclude the possibility that the Fourth Evangelist is writing for Christians, there is no doubt that Dodd thought that he was writing for the 'outsider' using a universe of discourse which he would understand.<sup>(92)</sup> This may be most clearly seen in Dodd's arguing that if the continuous present of 20.31 is the correct reading, it can be understood in terms of non-Christians whom he believed were in some sort of union with Christ.<sup>(93)</sup>

Moreover, even if Dodd were right, some pertinent questions remain to be asked. Once he had argued that Johannine theology was, in a large measure, independent of the Pauline,

"We are bound to ask about the origin and motives of this attempt to express a basically Jewish Gospel in terms intelligible to Greeks. Was it an individual or community enterprise? Was it consciously or mainly unconsciously carried through? And on what principles did those who attempted it decide that just these were the right categories for the translation of the Jewish Gospel?"<sup>(94)</sup>

The answers that Dodd gave may be succinctly put. We have seen that he argued that Greek thought was necessary for the full expression of the Gospel, that it was basically an individual enterprise carried on by one hardly aware of the duality of his thought. It is the insistent emphasis at this period on the necessity of Greek thought for the mature expression of the Gospel that is most suspect, and probably reflects Dodd's own fusion of Greek and Hebraic thought.

Dodd's understanding seems insecure at another point. He maintained that,

"In order to work towards a sound interpretation of the Fourth Gospel it is necessary to consider the work in its true context

of thought, so far as that is possible for us at this date.

If we approach it without regard to any such context, we are in danger of imposing upon it a subjective interpretation of our own, for we shall in fact be placing it in a context of our pre-conceived notions, which may be foreign to the intention of the evangelist."<sup>(95)</sup>

We have argued that Dodd's own attempt is not without its problems, the same is true of the attempts of his fellow scholars. Dodd insisted on the isolation of background material, yet he also affirmed that the Evangelist exercised a considerable creativity. For example, discussing 1.14 and its relationship to the Wisdom literature Dodd affirmed "...it would be idle to look for any real anticipation of the Johannine doctrine of the Incarnation."<sup>(96)</sup> In the discussion of the possible Philonic background he wrote "That there should be any more precise antecedents for the Johannine expression is not to be expected, since the evangelist, *ex hypothesi*, is describing a unique and unprecedented fact."<sup>(97)</sup> Yet he argued "The idea of an incarnation of the *λογος* as creative reason, though it still remains mysterious, is prepared for in the thought of the Logos immanent in men."<sup>(98)</sup> Kysar's question remains pertinent; "Why should the interpreter not attribute the Philonic characteristic in the passage to an independent and creative conception of the evangelist, if one is going finally to say after all the research is done, the heart of the passage 'still remains mysterious'?"<sup>(99)</sup> Grant was hasty in his conclusion that "In each case Dodd clearly shows what John owes to his predecessors and what his own contribution is."<sup>(100)</sup> In fact no explicit principle by which this could be done is advanced. If Dodd is pressed at this point by asking if every idea in the Prologue, for example, has an antecedent, however adequate, how much is allowed for either the Evangelist's creativity or the incarnation as unprecedented and causing such radical transformation of these antecedents?

"The Universe of Discourse" - Typical Reactions of Reviewers.

The general approval may be stated in Nineham's words; arguing that it was necessary for Johannine scholarship to avoid the extremes of Bultmann and Hoskyns, he continued.

"There was therefore every justification for a full description of the main religious systems of the time, so orientated as to enable us to judge for ourselves their relevance to the Johannine problem. Indeed by providing such an account and making a tentative essay in the use of it, even if he has made mistakes in detail, Professor Dodd may well have set the feet of Johannine scholarship in a larger and better room."<sup>(101)</sup>

There was a general feeling that Dodd's emphasis on the Hellenistic was too great. McCool argued that

"It is obvious that, as a product of the Hellenistic Christian Church, the Fourth Gospel was necessarily influenced by the dominant culture of its day, yet on re-reading this section, the present reader could not but wonder whether the Hellenistic coloration of the work necessarily involves the preoccupation with non-Christian Hellenistic thought which Dodd implies. Could it not be accounted for sufficiently by forces, which although Hellenistic, came from within the Christian orbit, such as the LXX, to take but one example."<sup>(102)</sup>

Similarly Grossouw, who welcomed the return of the consideration of the Hellenistic background, asked "Is one entitled to speak in John of Platonism, though in a somewhat vague and popularised sense?"<sup>(103)</sup> In one sense the answer must be in the affirmative because this is precisely how Platonism was in this period but Davey's reservation stemmed from the other direction. He wondered whether Dodd did not "Ascribe to the evangelist a too technically informed Platonic dialectic?"<sup>(104)</sup> None of this criticism was unexpected for Howard had earlier criticised Dodd for his assertion that the underlying philosophy of the Fourth Gospel was of a Platonic cast.<sup>(10)</sup>

Bultmann made similar criticisms but mainly from within his own understanding of the Johannine dualism as 'decision dualism' <sup>(106)</sup> Whilst this criticism was made from within Bultmann's own understanding, it was pertinent and relevant in view of Dodd's discussion of the Knowledge of God which focused in part upon the Hebraic background of that concept in terms of hearing and responding to God.

Whilst most English-speaking reviewers were satisfied with Dodd's treatment of Gnosticism, reservations were maintained by Bultmann and Grossouw. At this stage in his career Dodd followed the then customary British understanding of Gnosticism; "I use it here in the way in which it has been generally used for many years by theologians in this country, as a label for a large and somewhat amorphous group of religious systems described by Irenaeus and Hippolytus in their works against Heresy." <sup>(107)</sup> From this position he concluded that "The different views they (Christianity and Gnosticism) give of what the Christian ~~Yvovis~~ is make Johannine Christianity, in spite of the common background, an entirely different thing from semi-Christian or near-Christian Gnosticism." <sup>(108)</sup> The only significant reason why Gnosticism should be discussed as part of the universe of discourse is that some readers of the Fourth Gospel in the second century noted an affinity. Thus Dodd did not discuss the work of Hans Jonas and Bultmann in this field. Grossouw considered this treatment unsatisfactory and suggested that the main reason for this was that "Dodd considers the background of the gospel to be more Hellenistic than Eastern." <sup>(109)</sup>

It is possible that Dodd has been somewhat inconsistent in his treatment. He implicitly rejects the idea of Gnosticism as a movement older than Christianity, arguing that it is syncretistic. He is very sceptical about the possibility of reconstructing the essential Gnosticism - if there is such a category - or discovering a single answer to the question of the relationship of Gnosticism to Christianity, yet he



allows for the reconstruction of a tradition of speculation about the heavenly Ἀυθρωπος (110) This reconstruction in some small part is dependent upon Gnostic traditions. What is certain is, that in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" Dodd was operating with a more restricted and different understanding of Gnosticism than he held in 1932, and indeed in his commentary on the Johannine Epistles. In 1932 he wrote,

"Recent study of Gnosticism has greatly altered the view of it taken by nineteenth century scholars. Briefly, we now regard it not as heretical form of Christianity which appeared in the second century, but as a great religious movement, older than Christianity, which was sweeping the Hellenistic world about the time that Christianity appeared and which from the middle of the first century attempted to gather Christianity into its all embracing system, as it had already gathered elements from various religions of the ancient world, including Judaism." (111)

The general discussion of Gnosticism is bedevilled by confusion over the use of terms and problems with classification. Whilst it would be wrong to maintain that there is no fundamental difference between Dodd and Bultmann, it is necessary to note that Bultmann includes the Hermetica and parts of Philo in his understanding of γνῶσις. For Bultmann it was significant that Dodd's chapter on Gnosticism is so widely separated from that on the Hermetica. Implicitly Bultmann has drawn attention to another significant move in Dodd's thought. In 1932 the Hermetic corpus was considered the most important documents of non-Christian Gnosticism. (112) This is part of the movement which is characterised by Dodd's conclusion that the Fourth Gospel was Hellenistic rather than Eastern or Oriental.

With very few exceptions, English-speaking scholars applauded his conclusion about the Mandaean literature;

"It seems that we must conclude that the Mandaean literature has not that direct and outstanding importance for the study of the

Fourth Gospel which has been attributed to it by Lidzbarski, Reitzenstein and Bultmann, since it is hazardous, in the presence of the obvious and pervasive Christian influence, to use any part of it as direct evidence for a pre-Christian cult or mythology... Alleged parallels drawn from this medieval body of literature have no value for the study of the Fourth Gospel unless they can be supported by earlier evidence."<sup>(113)</sup>

Nineham expected that some would be dissatisfied with this discussion and Bultmann referred to an article by W. Baumgartner in "Theologische Zeitschrift", 1950, to show that the Mandaean question is not settled but the prevailing opinion was epitomised by McCool; "Dodd was never more effective in argument than when he demolished the attempts to explain this Gospel on a Mandaean background."<sup>(114)</sup> McCool did not observe that there has again been movement in Dodd's thought; whilst in 1932 he did not accept the real value of this background, he was by no means as unsympathetic as most of his compatriots for whom the work of Burkitt had been so significant.<sup>(115)</sup> British scholarship had never been impressed by the possibility of Mandaean influence on the Fourth Gospel. It is worth noting that, in his commentary, Barrett simply mentions the Mandaeans in a 'footnote', and even this is omitted in the second edition.

Some scholars noted the absence of any discussion of the Dead Sea Scrolls. This absence in a book published in 1953 is not that significant, although in the context of later Doddian works it might well be that as early as this, he had rejected their significance. In this context Dodd and Barrett are in the same category; Barrett has reaffirmed his position in the second edition of his commentary. More significantly McCool noted the absence of any discussion of apocalyptic; "This is an element of the thought of the period with which John might have been presumed to have been in sympathetic touch."<sup>(116)</sup> Dodd was not happy with apocalyptic. Bruce remarked, of the infinite variety of Scripture, that "It is no wonder that different parts should make a special appeal to different

readers. The distinctive feature of the Johannine Gospel and Epistles quite plainly make a special appeal to Professor Dodd (equally plainly, the Johannine Apocalypse does not)."<sup>(117)</sup> Even at this point it is possible to see Dodd influenced both by a personal preference and to doubt his consistency. He argued that "Although the evangelist has no sympathy with apocalyptic eschatology, he is certainly not unaware of it,"<sup>(118)</sup> yet his understanding of the Lamb of God depends to a great extent upon just such an apocalyptic background, the title being "Taken over by the evangelist from a tradition which also underlies the Apocalypse of John."<sup>(119)</sup>

Finally, in this section, Bultmann was one of a very few readers to criticise the paucity of references to the Odes of Solomon. This is surprising because in 1932, Dodd obviously thought them important; "It now seems likely that in the Odes, Ignatius and the Fourth Gospel we have three pieces of evidence for a type of Christian thought with roots far behind the date of the writings themselves."<sup>(120)</sup>

The Background and Purpose of the Fourth Gospel - A Comparison with Contemporary British Scholars.

In his commentary, Barrett too noted that there had been a tendency to undervalue the Greek background. He considered this background under two broad divisions, the non-Christian background and the Christian background. In the former, he noted the Old Testament, arguing that John regularly quotes the Septuagint. Judaism in both of its main channels, Apocalyptic and Rabbinic, had influenced John. Thus, contrary to Dodd he emphasised points of contact with Jewish Apocalyptic thought. Turning to the Greek background, Barrett discussed the influence of philosophy and noted that Plato had become, as it were, an 'atmosphere' in which men naturally thought. The religions of salvation, including the mystery religions have had some influence as had Gnosticism, under which heading he discussed the Hermetica. He offered a conclusion that was identical to Dodd's; "The fact, and it seems indisputable, is that both Hebraic and Hellenistic

elements are to be found in the gospel, and not lying side by side in a manner that could easily be disposed of by a source hypothesis, but fused into a unitary presentation of the universal significance of Jesus."<sup>(121)</sup> He argued that "The most illuminating background of the Fourth Gospel is that of Hellenistic Judaism."<sup>(122)</sup> this remark was made with specific reference to Philo, thus indicating a difference with Dodd. In his discussion of the Christian background Barrett saw an indebtedness to the Synoptic Tradition, whereas Dodd was, at this time, coming to the conclusion that the Fourth Evangelist had access to an independent tradition. Barrett saw, too, some links with Paul, although there is no close dependence. In the Fourth Gospel the theological controversies were largely different from those in the Pauline Epistles because Paul had won some important battles. Barrett saw more indebtedness to the rest of the Johannine corpus, stressing the value of the Apocalypse in its development; "The conjecture may be hazarded here...that the evangelist, the author of the epistles, and the final editor of the Revelation were all pupils of the original apocalypticist."<sup>(123)</sup> There is some idea here of a Johannine 'school' or 'circle'," certainly a move away from one singularly penetrating mind behind the Fourth Gospel. The purpose of the Gospel is defined in a sentence;

"In an age when the first formulations of the Christian faith were seen by some to be unsatisfactory, when gnosticism in its various forms was perverting the Gospel and adopting it for its own uses, he (the evangelist) attempted and achieved the essential task of setting forth the faith once delivered to the saints in the new idiom, for the winning of converts to the Church, for strengthening of those who were unsettled by the new winds of doctrine, and for the more adequate exposition of the faith."<sup>(124)</sup>

There are many obvious points of contact between Barrett's understanding and that of Dodd, notably in terms of the picture of the Evangelist, the

more mature expression of the faith and the dual purpose of the Gospel.

As we have seen, Hoskyns confined his discussion of the background of the Fourth Gospel to the Biblical and Christian tradition, offering an understanding totally other than that of Dodd. He discussed the purpose of the Fourth Gospel and First Epistle together, arguing, unlike Dodd, that they came from the same author. It is difficult to discover exactly what Hoskyns believes the purpose of the Gospel to have been. He argues, for example, that it will not do to see a polemic against docetism without "At the same time recognising that those ancient movements of religion are still deep-seated and destructive factors in our common life." (125)

Although he argues that we have to stand where the original readers stood, if we can discover that, it seems that he is concerned to discuss the purpose of the Fourth Gospel for today. Insofar as he did discover that original situation, he thought that both Epistle and Gospel were written against docetism. He found a decisive link between chapter 6 of the Gospel and the Epistle; "Defection and faith alike are conditioned by a stern, uncompromising reference to the flesh of Jesus. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the narrative is so phrased as to be pregnant with meaning for readers who, as is clearly stated in the First Epistle, were faced by a similar defection for an identical cause." (126)

Thus the Gospel is written for Christians with a very specific purpose in view. Again this is a much narrower view than that of Dodd, although it does more justice to the scandal of the Incarnation for Greek readers than does Dodd, who apparently thought that the radical transformation of Greek thought could be achieved so painlessly. Hoskyns' specific understanding is too narrow to do justice to the whole Gospel. Moreover, there is an implicit wider understanding which may be phrased in Barrett's words, "The Gospel is in the fullest sense of the term a theological work. John was concerned to confront his readers through Jesus with God." (127)

Insofar as this is true, it reflects Dodd's understanding as well.

As we have already seen, Howard in this period came to value very highly the Jewish background of the Fourth Gospel in both language and thought, although he recognised "There can be little doubt that Hellenistic Judaism from the time when it spoke Greek and read its scriptures in a translation instead of in Hebrew was unconsciously but increasingly becoming acclimatised in the world of Hellenism."<sup>(128)</sup> With his understanding of the three-fold presentation of the Gospel - the explicative, the mandatory and the proleptic - he implied that the Gospel was written for Christians, the product of "Many years of preaching, teaching, meditation and reflection."<sup>(129)</sup> Yet Howard was not consistent either about background or purpose. "His purpose was probably to set forth Christianity as the true Gnosis while expounding the unsoundness of much that prided itself upon that pretentious name."<sup>(130)</sup> However, this involved Howard in a much wider understanding of the background of the Gospel than he was always prepared to concede. We may illustrate this with two quotations which show how close to Dodd he was on occasions. Arguing that there is a sacramental reference in chapters 3 and 6, he continued, "In view of the widespread sacramentalism of contemporary religious movements in the Graeco-Roman world the writer could not fail to know (my italics) that such an interpretation must be put on them"<sup>(131)</sup> and, writing of the Johannine theology of new birth, or birth from above, "John avails himself of a vocabulary which was well understood in the world of Hellenism."<sup>(132)</sup> Although Dodd and Howard occasionally diverge in their understanding of the background, their views did tally at other times.

J.N. Sanders argued for the Alexandrian origin of the Gospel and went on to sketch out its background and purpose. There is a background in the life and teaching of the Church, in some access to valuable traditions about the life and teaching of Jesus, in Rabbinic lore and in "The type of religious speculation which later crystallised into the Gnostic systems of the second and later centuries."<sup>(133)</sup> The Gospel's purpose was "To commend the saving truths of Christianity to such persons

as might appreciate, and accept a thorough-going restatement of the Christian Gospel in terms of contemporary religious and philosophical thought."<sup>(134)</sup>

From this brief comparison it is possible to see obvious points of similarity and dissimilarity. There does seem to be something of 'Cambridge tradition' in Barrett, Dodd and Sanders, though equally obviously Hoskyns is far removed from it. Further, Howard is by no means as far removed from Dodd as some of his statements would lead one to suppose. Of those discussed, only Dodd - and that very briefly - saw the possibility of a polemic with the synagogue, although Strachan had suggested it.

#### Argument and Structure - An Overview.

In "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" Dodd followed exactly the pattern of New Testament studies that he set out in his Cambridge Inaugural lecture. Part two is a good example of "Detailed and exact exegesis of the text,"<sup>(135)</sup> and "Upon exact exegesis in turn rests interpretation in the wider sense."<sup>(136)</sup> Part three is a good example of this. He believed that interpretation in this sense was the goal of New Testament study. This interpretation would necessarily involve the centripetal approach that Dodd advocated in the Cambridge lecture.

Starting from the hypothesis that the present order of the Gospel is the correct one, deliberately planned by one who "Had some design in mind and was not necessarily irresponsible or unintelligent,"<sup>(137)</sup> Dodd offered a tripartite division of the Gospel. Chapter one is the proem, chapters 2-12 are entitled the "Book of the signs", whilst the third section, chapters 13-20 is called the "Book of the Passion", which is sub-divided into The Farewell Discourses and The Passion narrative. Chapter 21 is considered an appendix falling outside the design of the Gospel as a whole. The "Book of the signs" is found to divide itself naturally into seven episodes "Composed of narrative and discourse, both

related to a single dominant theme,"<sup>(138)</sup> so that "The incidents narrated receive an interpretation of their evangelical significance in the discourses; the truths enunciated in the discourses are given dramatic expression in the actions described."<sup>(139)</sup> Usually the discourse follows the narrative, and it is in the discourse that the significance which the act contains is brought out, but even this pattern is subject to variation although "Each of them tends to move from narrative, through to dialogue, to monologue, or at least to a form of dialogue in which comparatively long speeches are allotted to the chief speaker."<sup>(140)</sup> Most of the sequences have an epilogue, but furthermore, "While the several episodes thus constitute relatively complete and independent units, they are connected by a subtle system of cross-references and correspondences, in which recurrent symbols and catch-words play a part."<sup>(141)</sup> This unity is emphasised in the epilogues, but much more than this is intended for "The Book of the signs is so constructed that each several episode contains in itself the whole (italicized in original) theme of the Gospel: Christ manifest, crucified, risen, exalted, communicating eternal life to men."<sup>(142)</sup> As Dodd understands him, the Fourth Evangelist really has adopted that centripetal approach which is the hallmark of mature expression of the Gospel. These episodes have another unity, they all point forward to the culminating sign which is presented in the Book of the Passion.

The identical combination of narrative and interpretation is to be found in the Book of the Passion, only here the discourse material precedes the narrative. This is 'natural' since, while the Farewell Discourses presuppose the Passion narrative, to put them after this event would involve wrecking the dramatic scheme of the Gospel. The Book of the Passion is the climax and culmination of the Gospel. In making a distinction between the signs and the Great Sign, Dodd wrote,



"Here is something that happened in time, with eternal consequence. Though individual men may miss its significance, nevertheless the thing has happened and history is different: the whole setting of human life in this world is different.....But more: in it the two orders of reality, the temporal and the eternal, are united; the Word is made flesh. It is an event in both worlds; or rather in that world, of spirit and of flesh, which is the true environment of man, though he may fail to be aware of its two-fold nature. Thus the cross is a sign, but a sign which is also the thing signified. The preliminary signs set forth so amply in the gospel are not only temporal signs of an eternal reality; they are also signs of this Event, in its two-fold character as word and as flesh. They are true - spiritually, eternally true - only upon the condition that this Event is true both temporally (or historically) and spiritually or eternally."<sup>(143)</sup>

In this lengthy quotation a number of Doddian emphases stand out clearly, showing Dodd moving within a Platonic cast of thought and also illustrating his conviction that the Passion is an historical event, which John needs to narrate "In the main as a straightforward story, with only a minimum of intruded interpretative elements."<sup>(144)</sup> Dodd repeated his assertion of 1938 that the Johannine Passion narrative is non-theological in character being mainly simply an historical narrative.

#### Argument and Structure - the appreciation of reviewers.

Generally, Dodd's work was saluted here; it was almost universally applauded. Barton suggested "These chapters may well be considered the most strikingly original of all, and are obviously the fruit of long and careful observation of countless details in a Gospel that has not been merely studied but deeply loved."<sup>(145)</sup> McCool described this part as "The crown of the work,"<sup>(146)</sup> and Hooke wrote,

"Here, I think, Professor Dodd rises to heights of inspired exposition beyond anything he has yet written. After reading

the first two sections of the book one is impressed by the author's sound scholarship, but after reading the third section one is left with a renewed sense of the grandeur and majesty of the Fourth Gospel and its inexhaustible depth."<sup>(147)</sup>

It is natural to compare Dodd's division of the Gospel with that of Barrett. Barrett suggests this pattern - 1.1-18, Prologue; 1.19-12.50 Narratives, Conversations and Discourses; 13.1-17.26 Jesus alone with his disciples; 18.1-20.31 the Passion and Resurrection and 21 an appendix.<sup>(148)</sup> Another natural comparison is with Strachan's; 1.1-18, The Prologue; 1.19-4.54, the origins of the Christian Church; 5-12 the conflict between the Church and the world; 13-19 the Passion narrative; 20.1-29 the Resurrection narrative (verses 30 and 31 contain a statement of the purpose of the Gospel) 21 an appendix.<sup>(149)</sup> In calling his second division the "Book of the signs", Dodd is consciously moving in the realms of a centripetal understanding of these chapters much more so than Barrett with his looser description. Similarly, Strachan's divisions are less capable of such a centripetal understanding than Dodd's, and indeed break up a unity suggested by the presence of the signs, although it needs to be remembered that Dodd can only offer this by considering the whole of chapter one as a preface, and, on the face of it, there is little justification for doing so. In the second edition of his commentary, Barrett is unhappy about the combination of the Farewell Discourses and the Passion and Resurrection narratives under one heading,<sup>(150)</sup> although he noted that Dodd's division was very close to his own and gives no suggestion that an understanding of the evangelist's intention is at stake. Unless such divisions are read in the total context of a scholar's work, it is doubtful whether much that is significant can be learned from them, and they will, to some extent, be unsatisfactory. The only alternative to such short descriptions of the plan of the Gospel is an elaborate one, such as provided by J. Marsh,<sup>(151)</sup> but this amounts to a table of contents. Yet it must also be remembered that Dodd was at this time stressing the centripetal approach

to the New Testament.

Dodd was applauded for treating the Gospel as a unity and for making no attempt to rearrange it. He argued, "I conceive it to be the duty of an interpreter at least to see what can be done with the document as it has come down to us before attempting to improve upon it."<sup>(152)</sup> As we have seen, the early Dodd had welcomed such 'improvements'. To take an example of a classic instance, Dodd argued, as did Barrett later, that it was necessary in terms of the progression of theological thought that chapter five precedes chapter six.<sup>(153)</sup> He concluded that;

"The Book of the Signs.....exhibits a design and structure which respond sensitively to the development of the highly original ideas of the author. It constitutes a great argument, in which any substantial alteration of the existing order and sequence would disturb the strong and subtle unity which it presents, and which I take to be characteristic of the creative mind to which we owe the composition of the Fourth Gospel."<sup>(154)</sup>

Thus, Dodd accepted, and defended, the present position of 14.31. Hooke found his argument satisfying,<sup>(155)</sup> but Barrett argued that 14.31 should be followed by 18.1 and in the second edition of his commentary he considers Dodd's thesis and rejects it.<sup>(156)</sup> The typical reaction of English scholars may be illustrated by two quotations; "His insistence on explaining the Gospel as it stands, frees him from the work of dissection which has tended to mutilate the book in recent commentaries,"<sup>(157)</sup> and "Dr. Dodd has discerned in the Gospel an intricate but clear design and (save perhaps in minor details) his analysis is convincing. It is to be hoped that the exposition of this Gospel may no longer now be plagued by theories of displacement with their invitations to subjectivity; that it may generally be regarded as established that the key to the Gospel's composition is the pattern of the evangelist's thought and his theological intention"<sup>(158)</sup> English-speaking scholarship felt its natural inclination vindicated by the masterly exposition of Dodd, who followed Strachan in his abandonment of any re-ordering of the text. It was, perhaps, forgotten that a decision

to treat the gospel in its present order could be as open an 'invitation to subjectivity' as any re-ordering. There remained the possibility that Dodd had made the evangelist in his own centripetal image. Nineham was one of very few reviewers to wonder whether Dodd might not have found too neat a design in the Book of the Signs.<sup>(159)</sup> Another reaction came from the continent. Grossouw, while acknowledging Dodd's undoubted talent and the soundness of the principle of handling the text as it stands, was amazed that he did not consider more seriously the possibility of displacements. Maybe that was an expected reaction, but Grossouw does not appear to give credit to Dodd's earlier work in the field.<sup>(160)</sup>

Reviewers were not so impressed by Dodd's treatment of the Book of the Passion. A surprising number just did not mention it. An exception was Nineham, who was impressed by Dodd's discussion of the Farewell Discourses. Bultmann, too, was satisfied; for him it was a "High point of the work."<sup>(161)</sup> As we have seen, Dodd argued that the Passion Narrative was virtually without theological interest. He had held this view since at least 1938, and we have seen in this chapter that the event character of the crucifixion, and an accurate historical account of it, are necessary to Dodd's position. He did allow that there were five 'Theological pointers' of some interest; these were at 18.9, 18.32, 18.37, the use of *τετελειωται* as the last recorded word of Jesus, and the issue of water and blood in 19.34-35.<sup>(162)</sup> It is proposed here to consider briefly some such pointers where Dodd has seen no theological significance, whereas other English-speaking scholars have. Dodd argues that the Johannine date of the crucifixion may well reflect a definite tradition held at Ephesus, but he has steadfastly not seen any Paschal symbolism in the Fourth Gospel so that he allows for no such influence here. Jesus is, indeed, the Lamb of God, but the proper background is not to be found in Paschal imagery, but in apocalyptic idea of the Messiah as the leader of God's flock. Dodd had held this view since 1937, and has never changed it despite the fact that it had not won general acceptance

among scholars, and indeed that it was one of very few occasions when Dodd thought that the Fourth Evangelist could have borrowed from apoc-  
yptic.. There is a persistent and stubborn refusal to trace any Paschal  
imagery where many scholars have, in our opinion, rightly seen some.  
This may well have been instrumental in leading Dodd to follow one late  
minuscule manuscript at 19.29. This might also have been caused by his  
insistence on the event and factual nature of the Passion narrative.  
It is, perhaps, not without significance that the New English Bible  
follows this manuscript also,<sup>(163)</sup> although it must be remembered that  
Bernard and Strachan accepted this reading too.

Again, the incident of the Beloved Disciple and Mary is seen to  
be without theological significance; "Attempts to give a symbolic meaning  
are in general singularly unconvincing."<sup>(164)</sup> This is to ignore a trad-  
ition of scholarship, Roman Catholic and Protestant, of which E.F. Scott  
may be cited as typical; "What was valuable and permanent in Judaism has  
now passed over to Christianity: the 'Mother of Jesus' now dwells in the  
house of His disciples."<sup>(165)</sup> Again, Dodd was not totally isolated in  
his position. Bernard saw no symbolic meaning here, whereas Barrett  
(in both editions of his commentary) is not convinced of the historicity  
of the event, and is very unsure of any precise symbolic meaning that  
might be attached, although in the second edition he notes a good many.  
There is no discussion of the 'seamless garment' which many scholars  
have understood theologically, and whilst we are to understand the effu-  
sion of water and blood "Theologically, as a  $\sigma\eta\mu\epsilon\iota\omega\nu$  in the Johannine  
sense...It is not clear that the record is itself the product of theo-  
logical motives."<sup>(166)</sup>

Dodd's handling of the actual Passion narrative is not as convinc-  
ing as his treatment of the rest of the Gospel, nor indeed consonant with  
it. Rightly, many scholars have seen theological symbolism here precisely  
in those areas where Dodd has seen none. This is not to ask that Dodd  
must conform to the general understanding. It is to suggest that Dodd

has discussed this part of the Gospel firmly from within his own pre-suppositions about the author's intentions, and that such pre-suppositions do not bear the weight of examination. That so many reviewers did not discuss this section in any detail may well indicate that they did not consider this section very impressive, or that they were not prepared to criticise so substantially a work that the majority of them appreciated so much.

Argument and Structure - two final soundings.

Some reviewers had doubts about Dodd's discussion of the Johannine eschatology, their reservations may be set out in an extended quotation from Enslin:

"Dodd's name has long been associated with 'realised eschatology'. In this volume this is to be found, but in a most modest and disarming form. To him the central note of the type of Christian thought evidenced by John is summarised in the word  $\epsilon\rho\chi\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota\ \omega\rho\alpha\ \kappa\alpha\lambda\upsilon\upsilon\tau\epsilon\iota$   $\epsilon\sigma\tau\iota\nu$  That is, John.....drew upon a form of the traditions in which the eschatological emphasis had not gone far." (167)

Dodd argued that this understanding was more primitive than the eschatological emphasis which characterised primitive Christianity for in all probability it went back to Jesus himself. Enslin disagreed,

"To me the difference in emphasis between the Fourth and other gospels is due to a later attempt to salvage and restate the original kerygma.....of the immediate parousia, which earlier confidence had now lamentably proved mistaken and an increasing liability instead of the tremendous spur and drive to mission activity which two generations before it had been. Any attempt to remove this emphasis from the original message of Jesus involves, it seems to me, utterly insurmountable difficulties for any realistic reconstruction of the early history." (168)

Enslin reflects the thinking of English-speaking scholarship of the time more accurately. Although Dodd was to modify his view somewhat, notably

in "The Coming of Christ", 1951, it is the classical view that was expressed most clearly in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel". This was expressed most succinctly in "The Parables of the Kingdom", 1935. Of John 4.35-38, he wrote "Now harvest-time has come. Here, as in other cases, John is a true interpreter of the tradition lying behind the Synoptics, the more so because for him the reconstructed eschatology of the early church has no more interest."<sup>(169)</sup> Dodd's position may partly be accounted for by his dislike of apocalyptic and also by his conviction that in Jesus the supra-historical had entered history completely.<sup>(170)</sup> Dodd had emphasised one aspect of Johannine eschatology to the exclusion of the other, the futurist.

Barrett argued that the problem of eschatology was one of two basic theological problems confronting the Church when the Fourth Gospel was written. In his discussion, he also refers to the phrase "The hour cometh and now is" and notes that it is superficially contradictory but "There is a partial explanation of the paradox in the fact that John wrote from two standpoints, changing rapidly from one to the other. From a standpoint placed in the period of the ministry of Jesus 'the hour is coming'. From John's own standpoint within the life of the Church after the resurrection and Pentecost, 'the hour is now'."<sup>(171)</sup> In some ways this is similar to Howard's understanding of the Proleptic emphasis in the presentation of the teaching of Jesus that is to be found in the Fourth Gospel. Neither Barrett nor Howard suggest that John has 'jettisoned' the common New Testament eschatology. Barrett writes "In fact he has emphasised its truth, and at the same time emphasises its problems and inadequacies, perhaps more strongly than any other writer."<sup>(172)</sup> Both Barrett and Dodd find in the Fourth Gospel a mature expression of their understanding of Christian eschatology;

"It was necessary to find a new way of expressing the fundamental Christian affirmation of the Christian faith, that in Jesus Christ the new age had come, but had done so in such a way that it still

remained to come, so that Christians live both in this age and in the age to come. Paul had already laid the foundations for this task by the development of 'eschatological mysticism' but much remained for John to do."<sup>(173)</sup> John was successful in this work.

There can be no discussion here of the respective merits of these eschatologies, but each scholar has found, once more, in the Fourth Gospel, his own understanding. As one would expect, Dodd sees the Fourth Evangelist as returning to an emphasis of the teaching of Jesus and giving it classical expression.

Much recent Johannine scholarship has emphasised a polemic between John's Church and the Synagogue. As we have seen, Dodd thought that this was a possibility and we have discussed this in terms of the purpose of the Fourth Gospel.<sup>(174)</sup> Dodd does not seem able to do justice to the polemical side of the Fourth Gospel. Of the cleansing of the Temple, he wrote, that it was "An inevitable symbol of the old order in religion."<sup>(175)</sup> With the readership that Dodd has constantly in mind, why was this an 'inevitable symbol'? Certainly Christ cleansed the Temple, but this account seems to be placed in that part of the Fourth Gospel that suggests the supersession of Judaism by Christianity. In the third part of "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel", Dodd returned to chapter nine. In a footnote he suggests "The beggar on trial suggests to the Christian reader his own situation in the world - enlightened in baptism, and called upon to confess Christ before men."<sup>(176)</sup> Yet within two pages he seems to be suggesting that there is at least a background in the relationship between the Church and the Synagogue; "Observe that nowhere in this gospel, except in chapter IX, are we concerned with the relations between the Jewish authorities and the flock of Israel which is under their care, as distinct from their relations with Jesus himself. There is therefore no other place where the discourse about true and false shepherds, could be so fitly introduced."<sup>(177)</sup> This remark was also made in a footnote;



after that footnote, he continued, "The 'Pharisees' have expelled from God's flock the man whom Christ Himself enlightened. They are scattering the sheep whom Christ came to gather."<sup>(178)</sup> J.L. Martyn has made much of chapter nine in his understanding of the historical situation of the evangelist.<sup>(179)</sup> It is not suggested here that this understanding is correct, or indeed that Martyn's thesis may be found in embryo in Dodd's work. Yet there are hints that Dodd knew that the purpose of the Fourth Evangelist was wider than he generally conceded, and it is unfortunate that he did not wrestle with the apparent 'anti-semitism' of the Fourth Gospel, even though attention had already been drawn to it in a number of commentaries and significant articles.

"The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" - Summary.

English-speaking scholars recognised here a truly great book. Hooke drew attention to a sentence from it that "Seems to comprehend in brief the whole purpose of the book.....In particular, since in Jesus Christ the eternal Word was made flesh, everything He did, or said, or suffered must be scrutinized for inner meanings."<sup>(180)</sup> The more perceptive reviewers noted that it owed much to Dodd's work from the 1930s and in a significant way it is the monumental expression of that work. Dodd's understanding is at odds with certain features of the so-called 'New Look' at the Fourth Gospel which may be said to have an origin in a paper written by J.A.T. Robinson for a conference at Oxford in 1957.<sup>(181)</sup> The later Dodd has done much to undergird this 'New Look'. Within the heady enthusiasm for the 'New Look', "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" quickly began to appear almost as 'child out of its time'. We cannot review Johannine scholarship within the period of the 'New Look' here; suffice it to say at this point that both the second edition of Barrett's commentary and G.W. MacRae's article, "The Fourth Gospel and Religionsgeschichte", have gone some way towards rehabilitating Dodd's insights. MacRae suggests that

"Since the age of the Fourth Gospel was the age of Roman Hellenism,

characterised in many respects by a kind of religious universalism or syncretism, is it not possible that the Fourth Evangelist may have tried deliberately to incorporate a diversity of backgrounds into the one gospel message precisely to emphasise the universality of Jesus?"(182)

He argues that the Fourth Evangelist does precisely this, although he insists that his main background is to be found in the Wisdom tradition.

We have suggested that Dodd's understanding throughout the book is for the most part internally consistent, although there are important inconsistencies in his handling of certain subjects and, consistent with his own understanding of the Fourth Gospel, often however choosing not to discuss other interpretations which were damaging to his thesis. Moreover, the book is an excellent example of the task that he set New Testament scholars in his Cambridge Inaugural lecture and demonstrates the understandings disclosed there. Within the context of wider Johannine scholarship, it presented an alternative approach to, and understanding of, the Fourth Gospel than that offered by Bultmann. Finally, within the Doddian context there are discontinuities with his earlier work. He did not always draw attention to these and one wonders whether he always realised the significance of the shifts in his own understanding.

The book is the embodiment of his own description of the ideal interpreter who,

"Would be one who has entered into that strange first-century world, has felt its strangeness, has sojourned in it until he has lived himself into it, thinking and feeling as one of those to whom the Gospel first came; and who will then return into our world, and give to the truth that he has discerned a body out of the stuff of our own thought."(183)

Modern scholarship has doubted whether this journey is possible; certainly it is impossible without presuppositions. Others made the same journey,

or rather like Dodd they attempted the same journey, but went primarily to other 'places' in that world and offered different interpretations to our world. This journey may not be possible but Nineham warned of "The deep gulf between its context (that of the ancient text) and our situation."<sup>(184)</sup> New Testament scholarship still awaits the precise methodology by which this journey may be successfully accomplished.

It is appropriate to conclude this chapter with a quotation from Dodd, which speaks of another qualification for the interpreter, a qualification that many knew to be true of Dodd, "If there are other qualifications of which it is less fitting to speak in an academic lecture, I may be allowed to hint at them in a phrase familiar to theologians - *testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum*."<sup>(185)</sup>

References - Chapter III.

1. It is interesting to note that Dodd did not guide his Cambridge New Testament Seminar through Johannine studies. In a letter dated 3rd August, 1978, the Reverend G.M. Styler gave me this information, but noted that in 1939 some three sessions were devoted to chapters 13-17 of the Fourth Gospel in the context of A.C. Macpherson's paper, and that occasionally they turned to the Fourth Gospel when discussing the Passion and Resurrection narratives of the Synoptics. He continued "The minutes confirm my own memory, viz. that in about his last year as chairman (1948-49) Professor Dodd presented to the Seminar a number of matters that he dealt with in his book Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel.
2. The justification for including the first edition of Barrett's commentary is that he was a pupil of Dodd, and that the manuscript left his hand on 31st December, 1951.
3. Dodd's refusal to cite Bultmann is odd (on any grounds other than the wish to pursue his studies in his own school). He seems to be well aware of this and a weak reason is given on p.121. "Bultmann's massive commentary on the Fourth Gospel did not come to my hand as a whole until this book was complete". Howard used it, and Barrett did so extensively. Howard's inability to use Hoskyns's commentary is equally interesting and weak; he hopes that his review in J.T.S. will be consulted. Interestingly, in his lengthy review Bultmann acknowledged that The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel was "mainly based on the author's own primary studies" and that he ignored many relevant studies. The point was made particularly with reference to the unity of the Fourth Gospel.
4. Dodd, Interpretation, p.vii.
5. S.H. Hooke, Review of Interpretation in C.Q.R., 154, 1953, p.298 (cited Hooke).
6. Dodd, Interpretation, p.3cf (also in Background).
7. F.N. Davey, Review of Interpretation in J.T.S., 4, 1953, p.235f (cited Davey).
8. Ibid, p.236.
9. Editorial in Exp. Tim. 64, 1952-53, p.225. The point seen clearly here was that missed by Hunter, that this book takes up and develops much of what had been Dodd's developing Johannine stance.
10. W. Grossouw, Review of Interpretation in Vigiliae Christianae, 10, 1956
11. R. Bultmann, English edition of the Review of Interpretation in Harvard Divinity Bulletin, 27, 1963, p.22.
12. Ibid. p.10.
13. J.J. Collins, Review of Interpretation in Theological Studies, 15, 1954, p.465. (cited Collins).

14. In his review in the Hibbert Journal, W.H. Cadman described it as a "Noble book", Hooke a "Great book" and F.J. McCool in The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, volume 17, 1955, wrote "Here is a book which exactly fulfils the promise of its title. It is neither an introduction nor a commentary on the Fourth Gospel after the usual manner. Rather it is a profound and personal interpretation of the Fourth Gospel by one who regards that work as one of the peaks of New Testament theological writing, and who has given to it the years of exact and thoughtful study which such a work claims from the Christian scholar. Its rich content together with the clarity and ease of style with which it is expressed, ensure that this book will strongly influence Johannine studies for many years to come". J.M. Barton, in The Clergy Review, 38, 1953, called it "A profoundly original book". (cited Barton).
15. Collins, p.465f.
16. Barton, p.738.
17. Hooke may be cited as an example. "The book closes with an appendix on the historical aspect of the Fourth Gospel. This is full of fascinating suggestions which make one hope that Professor Dodd himself will give us another book on the problems which it raises", p.305. Although H.T.F.G. was published, the book that Hooke hoped for was not!
18. Bultmann, p.9f.
19. The reference is to the origin of H.T.F.G., and Founder in lectures given in 1954-55. Dodd regarded the former as the sequel to The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel or as an expansion of the appendix, see H.T.F.G., p.vii. It is not the natural sequel, although it is a significant expansion. I wonder whether Dodd ever fully realised the tensions between his two major works.
20. Howard, Fourth Gospel revised by Barrett, p.244.
21. Nineham, Review of Interpretation, Theology, 56, 1953, p.402 (cited Nineham).
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid, p.404.
25. Ibid, p.403f.
26. Ibid, p.404. This view of the ideal interpreter was that of one "Who has entered into that strange first-century world, has felt its strangeness, has sojourned in it until he has lived himself into it, thinking and feeling as one of those to whom the Gospel first came". Inaugural, p.40. For all his laudatory appreciation of Dodd's methodology Nineham has apparently denied the very possibility that Dodd sets out here. This may be seen in his "Use and abuse of the Bible", p.39, "To suppose that we can think like men of another age is as much of an illusion as to suppose we can think in a wholly different way".
27. Ibid.

28. Similarly, Barrett in the first edition of his commentary lamented that he had not been able to give due consideration to these documents. In the second edition, p.viii he writes "I do not believe that Qumran holds the key to John". That may well be true, and it is indeed a fair comment in that in the twenty-five years between the two editions, what we might call 'Qumran fever' had waxed and waned.
29. In the first edition of his commentary, Barrett quoted from W. Temple Readings in St. John's Gospel, to show how far the pendulum had swung. On p.3 "The gospel is through and through Palestinian. The notion that it is any sense Hellenistic is contrary to its whole tenour".
30. McCool, p.112.
31. Nineham, p.404; the identical point was made by R.M. Grant in his review in The Journal of Religion, p.132, "His book, like the Fourth Gospel itself, provides an excellent corrective to the excesses of modern 'biblical theology' by giving a fair place to the Hellenistic elements of early Christianity" and Grossouw wrote of the "Wholesome reaction against concentration on Jewish background".
32. Dodd, Interpretation, p.133.
33. F.F. Bruce, Review of Interpretation in Evangelical Quarterly, 26, 1954, p.239.
34. Barton, p.730.
35. R. Kysar, The background of the prologue of the Fourth Gospel: a critique of historical methods, Canadian Journal of Theology, 16, 1970, pp.250-55.
36. Kysar, Thesis, p.67.
37. cf. Kysar, The background of the prologue of the Fourth Gospel: a critique of historical methods, p.254f. I have placed his first and second 'weakness' together.
38. Dodd, Interpretation, p.12f.
39. M.S. Enslin, Review of Interpretation, J.B.L., 74, 1954, p.45; similar value judgments were offered by Grossouw in Three Books on the Fourth Gospel, N.T., I, 1956, pp.35-46 and McCool, p.112 who considered the treatment oppressive.
40. Dodd, Interpretation, p.6.
41. Ibid. p.9.
42. Estlin Carpenter op cit p.312, cf. Dodd The Bible and the Greeks, p.247, "Thus the parallels between the Poimandres and the New Testament are explicable as the result of minds working under the same general influence".
43. cf. her Hermetic Religion and the Religion of the Fourth Gospel in J.B.L., 49, 1930, pp.265-76. The conclusion is on p.276, "Hermeticism and the Fourth Gospel had many points in common. Together they are exponents of the higher ranges of religious life of the Mediterranean world in the New Testament period...But is not this

43. (Contd) the greatest difference of all and the most determining one for their permanent religious value, that one looked back to a mere nebulous literary tradition, while the other was grounded in history and found in a personality the embodiment of the religious experience that it advocated". She was more impressed by the differences than the similarities.
44. Howard, Christianity, p.196; Pribnow's book was published in 1934. The four words were ἀθανασία, ἀθανάτος, ἀφθαρσία and ἀφθαρτος
45. G.D. Kilpatrick, The Religious background of the Fourth Gospel in F.L. Cross Studies in the Fourth Gospel, Mowbrays, 1957, pp.36-44; this quotation p.38.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid. p.39.
48. Ibid, p.40.
49. Ibid, p.41.
50. Ibid, p.40.
51. Ibid. p.42.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid. p.43.
54. G.D. Kilpatrick, What John tells us about John in Studies in John, Supplement to Novum Testamentum, 24, pp.75-87; this quotation on p.85.
55. See 41 above.
56. Dodd, Interpretation, p.53.
57. R.E. Brown, The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament, Exp. Tim. 78, 1966-67, p.23.
58. Barnabas Lindars, Commentary, p.40.
59. Hooke, p.301.
60. cf. Interpretation, p.420ff.
61. Kysar, Thesis, p.74ff.
62. Dodd, Prologue, p.12, for details of publication see 45 above.
63. Dodd, Interpretation, p.152.
64. Ibid. p.152f.
65. Ibid. p.153.
66. Ibid. p.151.
67. Ibid. p.154.
68. Ibid. p.151.
69. Ibid.

70. Ibid. p.156.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid. p.159.
73. Ibid.
74. Kysar, Thesis, p.302.
75. Dodd, Interpretation, p.165f.
76. Ibid. p.166.
77. Ibid. p.159.
78. cf. Dodd, Prologue, p.12 where the analogy with Abt Vogler is used.
79. See 70 above.
80. See 63 on previous page.
81. cf. Interpretation, p.296, "The Logos-doctrine is placed first, because, addressing a public nurtured in the higher religions of Hellenism, the writer wishes to offer the Logos-idea as the appropriate approach, for them, to the central purport of the Gospel, through which he may lead them to the historical actuality of its story, rooted as it is in Jewish tradition". cf. also p.371.
82. Nineham, p.407.
83. Dodd, Interpretation, p.6.
84. Ibid. p.309f.
85. Ibid. p.406.
86. Ibid. p.81f.
87. Davey, p.243f.
88. Ibid. p.244.
89. Howard, Christianity, p.22, by 'Explicative' he understood the taking of some fairly inconspicuous feature of the primitive tradition and unfolding it; by 'Mandatory' taking a conception of Jesus which is "Found in solution in the earlier tradition and by constant repetition applying it as a title of Jesus", e.g. Lk. 4.43 "For this end I was sent" and the development into "He who sent me", found 26 times in the Fourth Gospel; by 'Proleptic', "That Johannine emphasis by which the end is seen from the beginning".
90. Hooke, p.229.
91. Ibid. p.300.
92. cf. Dodd, Interpretation, p.9.
93. cf. Ibid.
94. Nineham, p.406.
95. Dodd, Interpretation, p.4.



96. Ibid. p.275.
97. Ibid. p.281.
98. Ibid. p.280f.
99. Kysar, Thesis, p.69.
100. Grant, p.132.
101. Nineham, p.406.
102. McCool, p.113.
103. Grossouw, p.237.
104. Davey, p.244.
105. Howard, Christianity, p.124; though the point was made specifically with reference to Dodd's position in Apostolic Preaching, it was commonplace in his writings of the period.
106. Bultmann, p.13.
107. Dodd, Interpretation, p.97.
108. Ibid. p.114.
109. Grossouw, p.237.
110. cf. Dodd, Interpretation, p.98 and p.243.
111. Dodd, Present Tendencies, p.249f.
112. cf. Ibid. p.250.
113. Dodd, Interpretation, p.131.
114. McCool, p.112.
115. cf. Dodd, Present Tendencies, p.250.
116. McCool, p.113.
117. Bruce, p.239.
118. Dodd, Interpretation, p.236.
119. Ibid. p.238.
120. Dodd Present Tendencies, p.249.
121. Barrett, Commentary, I. edition, p.32.
122. Ibid. p.33.
123. Ibid. p.52.
124. Ibid. p.21.
125. Hoskyns, Commentary, p.49.

126. Ibid. p.57.
127. Barrett, Commentary, II. edition, p.97, where the point is made that Hoskyns and Davey have given classical expression to this understanding.
128. Howard, Christianity, p.30.
129. Ibid. p.18.
130. Ibid. p.165.
131. Ibid. p.143.
132. Ibid. p.94.
133. J.N. Sanders, The Fourth Gospel in the early church, C.U.P., 1943, p.85.
134. Ibid.
135. Dodd, Inaugural, p.7.
136. Ibid.
137. Dodd, Interpretation, p.290.
138. Ibid. p.384.
139. Ibid.
140. Ibid.
141. Ibid. p.386.
142. Ibid. cf. p.383, where the structure and development of the Book of the signs is compared to a musical fugue.
143. Ibid. p.439.
144. Ibid. p.431f.
145. Barton, p.737.
146. McCool, p.113.
147. Hooke, p.303.
148. Barrett, Commentary, I. edition, p.11.
149. Strachan, The Fourth Gospel: its significance and environment, p.97f.
150. cf. Barrett, Commentary, II. edition, p.12.
151. J. Marsh, Commentary, 1968, pp.85-89.
152. Dodd, Interpretation, p.290.
153. cf. Ibid. p.340.
154. Ibid. p.389.

155. cf. Hooke, p.304.
156. Barrett, Commentary, II. edition ad loc.
157. Grant, p.133.
158. Davey, p.273f.
159. cf. Nineham, p.406.
160. cf. Grossouw, p.238.
161. Bultmann, p.21
162. cf. Dodd, Interpretation, pp.432-39.
163. Professor Moule assures me that Dodd's influence was not decisive here, the decision being unanimous.
164. Dodd, Interpretation, p.428.
165. E.F. Scott, op cit p.74f.
166. Dodd, Interpretation, p.428.
167. Enslin, p.47.
168. Ibid.
169. Dodd, Parables, p.187.
170. cf. Smalley, John, p.238.
171. Barrett, Commentary, I. edition p.56.
172. Ibid. p.57.
173. Ibid. p.57f.
174. cf. Dodd, Interpretation, p.81f.
175. Ibid. p.300.
176. Ibid. p.357.
177. Ibid. p.359.
178. Ibid.
179. J.L. Martyn, History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel, New York, 1968.
180. Hooke, p.306, citing Interpretation, p.434.
181. J.A.T. Robinson, The New Look on the Fourth Gospel, Studia Evangelica, 1959.
182. G. MacRae, The Fourth Gospel and Religionsgeschichte, C.B.Q., 32, 1970, pp.13-24, this quotation p.15.

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183. Dodd, Inaugural, p.40f. In Religious Experience and Christian Faith p.6, (SCM 1981), Dillistone affirms that Dodd was following what "Was regarded at Oxford as the only method of true scholarship: grapple with the text; set it in its proper context; compare it with other writings of the period; search for the central concepts and concerns of the age; finally, when the meaning of the text in its original setting seems to have become clear, transfer that meaning to the thought-forms of a later time through the medium of language which is strong, appropriate and durable. In such a view, a comprehensive facility in language is the pathway which leads to a reliable interpretation of the historical path and into a fruitful application of its lessons to the problems of contemporary life". Dillistone drew his information from R.G. Collingwood's autobiography. Thus, while Dodd's work is significant, his understanding of the task and role of the interpreter is not innovative.
184. Nineham, The Lessons of the Past for the Present, in The Church's Use of the Bible Past and Present, S.P.C.K., 1963, pp.145-69, this quotation p.166.
185. Dodd, Inaugural, p.41.

## Chapter IV.

### The Johannine Epistles.

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The Johannine Epistles.

Dodd's commentary on the Johannine Epistles, 1946, was part of his attempt to discover the universe of discourse of the Fourth Gospel.<sup>(1)</sup> In 1937, he had published "The First Epistle of John and the Fourth Gospel".<sup>(2)</sup> These will be the primary sources for our study of Dodd's discussion of these epistles. Its context will be provided by a brief survey of the opinions offered in Moffatt's "An Introduction to the literature of the New Testament"<sup>(3)</sup> and Kümmel's "Introduction to the New Testament",<sup>(4)</sup> supplemented by a comparison of the articles in "Peake's Commentary on the Bible" in its two editions of 1919 and 1962,<sup>(5)</sup> and the commentaries by A.E. Brooke in "The International Critical Commentary", 1912 and J.L. Houlden in the "Black's New Testament Commentaries", 1973, which is not only the latest commentary in English but also a natural comparison with a commentary in "The Moffatt New Testament Commentary".<sup>(6)</sup> Throughout the review an attempt will be made to focus on three questions neatly posed by Houlden:- Firstly, "To what circumstances in the church were they addressed? Secondly, What is the relationship (of time, authorship and circumstance) between the four works? and thirdly, What are their affiliations in the thought of the time?"<sup>(7)</sup> Within this context two works of J.A.T. Robinson, "The destination and purpose of the Johannine Epistles" and "Redating the New Testament"<sup>(8)</sup> will be taken as a 'case study'. Throughout, an attempt will be made to see where Dodd is influenced by contemporary scholarship, and where he influenced it, and to examine the implications of his work in the context of his wider Johannine study. Finally, an attempt will be made to see if any specific Doddian stances can be detected.

Moffatt described the First Epistle as an "Encyclical or pastoral manifesto"<sup>(9)</sup> in which the author disclosed his concern about the effects on the Church of some semi-gnostic teaching. He suggested that "The plan is unstudied and unpremeditated; it resembles a series of meditations or variations on one or two simple themes, rather than a carefully constructed

melody,"<sup>(10)</sup> but, a careful study of the context reveals "A subtle connection between paragraphs or even cycles of thought which at first sight appear unlinked."<sup>(11)</sup> The major polemic is against some sort of Gnosticism which had issued in a docetic Christology although in 3.1 he discerned "A side reference to Jewish rivalry"<sup>(12)</sup> and he noted that three scholars, Wurm, 1904, Clemm, 1904 and Belser, 1906, had argued that the heretics were Jews. Moffatt argued that this could not be so, since Docetism is never connected with Judaism<sup>(13)</sup> although such a judgement could not be maintained now. He observed that most British scholars argued in favour of identical authorship for the Epistles and the Fourth Gospel but, having surveyed the linguistic data, the use of the Old Testament and the differences of ideas, Moffatt argued for two authors; "Both works rise from the same plot of early Christian soil; both aim at developing the faith of the church and (especially the homily) at safeguarding it against current errors; both lay stress on the evangelic historical tradition; but beyond the general fact that the homily presupposes the teaching and spirit of the gospel, their mutual connections remain obscure."<sup>(14)</sup> Moffatt considered the possibility of simultaneous publication but he did not react favourably to it. The author of the First Epistle had a share in the process by which the Fourth Gospel came to birth. Finally, the epistle is to be dated in the same period as the Fourth Gospel, not later than the first quarter of the second century.

Kümmel, too, asserted that there is no discernible structure to the epistle, at best there is a frequent repetition of two themes, "Proper faith in Christ, and the necessary connection between faith and right behaviour."<sup>(15)</sup> Any attempt to find a more complicated structure is more ingenious than convincing, although he himself wrote in terms of three cycles of ideas. The work is "A tractate intended for the whole of Christianity, a kind-of manifesto."<sup>(16)</sup> It is not addressed to a specific occasion, nor indeed to a specific group of readers. It is neither specifically Jewish nor Greek. Yet there is an aim, "1 John is seeking to warn against false

teachers who have arisen in the Christian communities."<sup>(17)</sup> This does imply that it is addressed to a specific situation and it becomes necessary to discover the nature of the false teachers. Along with many, Kümmel suggested "A gnostic-enthusiastic movement which offered a docetic Christology,"<sup>(18)</sup> Thus he rejected J.C. O'Neill's thesis that twelve Jewish heterodox maxims can be separated out from the Epistle, which the author, a former member of this group, expanded in a Christian direction in the hope of converting those of his group who had not yet followed him into the Church. Kümmel argues convincingly that the Epistle was not concerned with those who did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah, but with those who do not accept the flesh of Jesus. He continued "Nor could the ostensibly missionary aim have been achieved by the unmistakable christianising of texts which were already known to the intended readers."<sup>(19)</sup> He argued that, even if one might be correct in the general description of the heresy, it is impossible to link this with names known to us from church history."<sup>(20)</sup> He was not impressed by recent attempts to link the Epistle with Qumran. He argued for identity of authorship, allowing full weight to the differences between the two works, those noted by most scholars, he concluded, with specific reference to the linguistic differences, they are not such as to make one "Say that it is inconceivable that they may both have been written by the same writer and with a considerable passage of time in between."<sup>(21)</sup> Of the decisive question of differences of ideas, he argued "There are no cogent reasons for assuming that 1 John is to be attributed to another author than John."<sup>(22)</sup> Many of the differences are to be accounted for in terms of difference of purpose. The priority is with the Gospel, the Epistle being dated between 90 and 100 A.D.

Two points must be made of this discussion; Firstly, in the discussion of authorship, much leads one to suppose that Kümmel's argument should lead to the conclusion that the works were by different authors. Secondly, at this period in Church history what conceivably could be



"A tractate for the whole of Christianity"?

The short article in the first edition of Peake's commentary was written by A.L. Humphries.<sup>(23)</sup> This was a much more conservative approach than Moffatt's. Humphries argued that the work was a letter - in this he was almost alone - from one in a position of authority and responsibility, yet this letter was not written in response to a request for guidance. He accepted Apostolic authorship, and of course, identity of authorship; "Differences there are, but only such as are easily accounted for by some interval of time between the writings and by a difference in their theme and aim."<sup>(24)</sup> The major purpose of the Epistle is to protect its readers from heresy, generally recognised as some sort of gnosticism - it appears that Humphries accepted the possibility of a pre-Christian gnosist, although not in so many words - with a docetic Christology. Cerinthus is mentioned, but Humphries did not commit himself to the traditional view that the Apostle John argued with him. The Epistle, which is dated around 90 A.D., is difficult to analyse.

In the same volume, J.H. Moulton wrote of "The language of the New Testament". He argued that "The Fourth (Gospel), however, with the Johanne epistles (which no one with the faintest instinct of style would detach from it) belongs to a writer correct enough in grammar, but simple to baldness, and with no sense of idiom; Greek was, with him, no mother tongue."<sup>(25)</sup> Here a competent linguistic scholar maintained the Semitic character of John's Greek. By way of anticipation it may well have been articles like this and the work of A.E. Brooke and R.H. Charles that led Dodd to conclude that in this country at least, the question of identity of authorship, was a closed case.<sup>(26)</sup>

In the revised edition of Peake's Commentary, G. Johnston discussed the Johannine Epistles.<sup>(27)</sup> He argued that the First Epistle is a homily addressed to a particular group at a time of schism. He suggests that the "Onus of proof is on those who deny common authorship"<sup>(28)</sup> yet,

despite this stance and a survey of the evidence, he concludes "The question of common authorship should perhaps be left open, because the Greek usage must not be underestimated."<sup>(29)</sup> This is typical of Johnston's treatment; he seems content to simply place contradictory ideas in juxtaposition. A good example of this is provided by the discussion of date; the Epistle might be as late as 156 A.D. but the evidence is satisfied by a date around 100 A.D. The evidence was the church organisation reflected in the Epistle and the attack on docetism. On the next page the remarkable parallels between the Epistle and Qumran are mentioned, "It may be necessary to place 1 John earlier."<sup>(30)</sup> Like many, Johnston found the Epistle hard to analyse; "The thoughts are curiously convoluted."<sup>(31)</sup>

#### A.E. Brooke's Commentary.

Brooke's was a significant commentary. Interestingly, the relationship of the Epistles and Gospels is the first item discussed in the introduction, reflecting the predominant interest in questions of authorship among British scholars in this period. Both Dodd and Houlden discuss this problem much later in their introductions and at less length. Brooke's discussion is exhaustive, beginning disarmingly enough with the observation "The discussion of the question whether the First Epistle and the Gospel are by the same author may seem to many almost a waste of time. The view which at first sight seems obvious has always been maintained by the majority of scholars who have investigated the subject."<sup>(32)</sup> Yet Brooke knew that this view was under increasing attack. His presentation of the arguments depends heavily upon Holtzmann's. It takes the form of a list of many common phrases, fifty-one from the First Epistles with one or more parallels in the Gospel. He concluded that the "Usage suggests a writer who varies his own phrases rather than a copyist."<sup>(33)</sup> In view of E.D. Freed's article, "Variations in the language and thought of John", which will be discussed later, this is an important observation. Inevitably there is a degree of subjectivity about all judgements in this area. The concept of a 'Johannine School' destroys the notion of slavish

imitation or copying, and suggests the possibility that well known phrases were unintentionally varied within the group. Brooke argued that the argument from style was supported by arguments from vocabulary and ideas. He was aware of differences, but more impressed by the similarities. For Holtzmann's fifty 'Peculiarities', Brooke found similarities from the Gospel and argued that most of the differences can be accounted for in terms of differences of standpoint and expression and not in terms of fundamental conception; "The Gospel taught us who and what the Christ is. The Epistle is written to assure those who had learned its lesson that, if they will but remember it, they can feel confidence as to the relationship in which they stand to God in His Son Jesus Christ."<sup>(34)</sup> Although discussion will be postponed until Dodd's position is reviewed, it is necessary to note that Brooke saw differences in the understanding of both atonement and eschatology. Nonetheless, he was more impressed by the similarities.<sup>(35)</sup>

Thus, Brooke argued for unity of authorship, suggesting a considerable interval between the two works. Finding Lightfoot's notion that the Epistle was the first commentary on the Gospel hard to accept because of the differences alluded to above, Brooke moved on to consider the question of priority. In favour of the priority of the Epistles he noted that the opening four verses show a Logos theology developing, the possibility that the concept of Christ as the "Other Paraclete" of John 14.16 was suggested by the thought of Christ as the Paraclete in 1 John 2.1, the more primitive eschatology of the epistles, and the possibility that the understanding of atonement in the Epistles, is closer to the Pauline idea of Propitiation than to some Johannine ideas. Allowing full weight to this evidence, Brooke argued that there was much in the Epistles that needed the Gospel to explain it and there is no mistaking the general impression that "Originality and force is always in the Gospel rather than in the Epistle, where the thoughts are, as a rule, derived and generalised."<sup>(36)</sup> It was precisely this that had led many scholars,

notably on the continent, to argue that the Epistles were by a copyist, someone who did not understand the riches of John's thought.

Brooke discussed the aim of the Epistle without reference to the false teachers. Whilst Brooke accepted that there was a polemical aim, "It is probably true that the writer never loses sight altogether of the views of his opponents in any part of the Epistle,"<sup>(37)</sup> he thought that the primary aim was pastoral, that is, it is to be understood in terms of edification. Brooke was inconsistent, since in this same section he complimented Holtzmann for demonstrating how much of John's stance is determined by his stand against Gnostic ideas, "And it is of primary importance to realize the undoubted polemical aim of much of its contents, and the modifications in his statement of what he believes to be positive truth, which are due to the fact that he never loses sight, in anything he says, of the false teaching and unchristian conduct of his opponents."<sup>(38)</sup> There is here a lack of discussion of the relationship of the pastoral to the polemical. There is certainly a link between the pastoral and the polemical and maybe Brooke has not done justice to the polemical.

Brooke suggested that the destination of the Epistles is Asia Minor in general, and Ephesus in particular. Further, he noted that no analysis of the First Epistles has found general acceptance, "The aphoristic character of the writer's meditations is the real cause of this diversity of arrangement, and perhaps the attempt to analyse the Epistle should be abandoned as useless."<sup>(39)</sup> Generally, Brooke followed Häring, who saw a triple presentation of the two leading ideas, the Christological and the ethical.<sup>(40)</sup>

At this point in the introduction, Brooke moved on to the discussion of the false teachers and noted that there were many possibilities, with the majority opinion still favouring Cerinthus as the primary target. He was unhappy about the identification of just one type of error and suggested that "The Epistle is directed against various forms of teaching. The writer sums up the different tendencies in them which seem to him the

most dangerous and characteristic of the times. He sets out clearly the corresponding truths which in his opinion will prove to be their safest antidote."<sup>(41)</sup> Yet Brooke was not too happy with so broad an approach, "At the same time his writing may have been occasionally one special type of false teaching, or one special incident in the history of his Church in connection with it."<sup>(42)</sup> In this context he considered four possible targets. If there is only one opponent, then it cannot be Judaism, yet he did see some conflict with Judaism and notably in the situation of bitterness immediately after the fall of Jerusalem. This was precisely the background that he suggested for the Gospel in which the bitterness is more evident.<sup>(43)</sup> A greater contrast with Dodd's understanding of the Gospel and the First Epistle would be hard to find. Brooke did not concentrate on this to the exclusion of other possibilities. There is no need to cite more than his opening sentence in terms of the relationship of the Epistle to Gnosticism and docetism, "The connection of the Epistle to Gnostic ideas is quite apparent,"<sup>(44)</sup> and "The connection of this Epistle and 2 John with Docetism has been recognized from early times."<sup>(45)</sup> There is a much longer discussion on the relationship of the Epistle to Cerinthianism. He concluded by arguing that the Epistle did, indeed, oppose Cerinthianism, or something very much like it. This is indeed the major target for it combined those ideas of Judaism and Gnosticism which the author found most abhorrent. Brooke's problem here is that, whilst the First Epistle might be held to oppose Cerinthianism, insofar as it can be discovered, there is little in the Fourth Gospel that can be held to do so explicitly, and yet he argues for an identical setting for both works. Moreover, the Fourth Gospel may be held to be 'anti-semitic' but this can hardly be asserted of the First Epistle. Brooke would appear to have been more accurate in his recovery of the situation of the Fourth Gospel than of the First Epistle. There were to be discoveries and advances in scholarship which have made Brooke's understanding more tenable in that the varied nature of first century Judaism is now more widely known.

J.L. Houlden's Commentary.

In the index of this commentary there are but four references to Dodd. This is surprising, since this is the first major commentary published in English since Dodd's. Whilst this paucity of reference does indicate how far Johannine scholarship has developed since the classical Dodd, there is a greater Doddian influence than this number of references suggests.

Houlden, too, in his discussion of the situation of the Epistle, notes a schism, but argues we can know nothing of the events leading up to it. He suggests that the author might represent the rump that is left behind; this is a novelty in the scholarship that we have reviewed. Certainly "We have reached a stage in the development of Church life where, at least to some minds, doctrine is already too fixed to tolerate diversity, and where the institution is too rigid to go to great lengths to keep dissidents within the fellowship."<sup>(46)</sup> This is contrasted with Paul's attitude. Thus our epistle comes comparatively late in the development of Church life. Houlden notes that this is not 'sober speculation', although he feels that he is keeping within the bounds of the evidence. He canvasses various possibilities of Church order and concludes that, whilst we may not be able to discover the precise meaning of 'Elder', the Elder is conscious of being a bastion of tradition - one involved in the establishing of criteria for orthodoxy which was so strong a pre-occupation of the Church in the second century, both in the main body and in the sects."<sup>(47)</sup> Certainly the doctrinal issue is of greater importance than either ecclesiastical organisation or personal animosities. In this context, Houlden considers Gnosticism. He understands it in a wide context;

"A more diffuse and general theological culture, bearing the characteristics found in the sects, but discernible already in the first century....It is marked by dualism, depreciation of material reality, a fondness for the esoteric and the speculative in religion

and a strong concern for the salvation of a spiritual elite, and was composed of ingredients drawn from Greek, Jewish and Oriental sources."<sup>(48)</sup>

This serves to show that the debate about the nature and description of Gnosticism was continuing throughout our period, and indeed, still is.<sup>(49)</sup>

For Houlden, the major question posed in the reconstruction of the situation of the Epistles is, that of "Precisely what made 'orthodoxy' orthodox and 'heresy' heretical?"<sup>(50)</sup> Although the contrast must not be overdrawn, Houlden reflects more closely the Bultmannian understanding of primitive Christianity than the Doddian. It reflects more accurately the nature of primitive Christianity than the Doddian understanding.

Houlden, continuing his description of the situation, begins from the dubious reputation of the Fourth Gospel in the second century. This springs mainly from its speculative and abstract character, and a marked disinterest in the historical roots of Jesus. This reflects a docetic tendency which has resulted in the virtual abandoning of any belief in His future return or "Such 'earthly' doctrines as the physical resurrection of the faithful which accompanied it."<sup>(51)</sup> Houlden knew that, at most, this was a possible but partial view of the Fourth Gospel, for there are passages which suggest precisely these doctrines to those 'in the know'. He argues that some of these "Look as if they might be corrections to a previously more homogeneous and more smoothly running narrative."<sup>(52)</sup> These passages are all anti-gnostic in tendency and all represent the development of the Fourth Gospel in the orthodox direction. These are among the points that the First Epistle stresses;

"In 1 John then we meet a stage in the Johannine teaching which is also encountered in certain, possibly added, passages in the Fourth Gospel. They represent a restatement of Johannine doctrine which lacks both the speculative quality and power of mind which is manifested in the greater part of the Fourth Gospel. It is a stage which attempts to draw back, under conservative pressure, exerted

perhaps from the weight of 'normative' Christianity elsewhere, from Gnostic-type tendencies and towards the teaching of the main body of the Church."<sup>(53)</sup>

The heretics are those who would not accept this withdrawal; at least they were consistent in their understanding of Johannine theology. If this is so, then "The Epistle shows those who felt themselves to be the guardians of the Johannine tradition, at a time somewhat later than the emergence of its finest literary fruit, the Gospel of John, engaging in a policy of withdrawal in the direction of simple and mainstream teaching, like that represented by the Gospels of Matthew and Luke."<sup>(54)</sup> Some scholars would reject this understanding of the Fourth Gospel, Dodd certainly would. Neither would the picture of the Johannine community be universally accepted. Houlden has to explain why, in this situation, there is no Old Testament quotation in 1 John. It will not do to simply say that this may be seen "As another example of his (the author's) imperfect assimilation of 'orthodoxy'."<sup>(55)</sup> It was, after all, an element that the Evangelist had firmly grasped. Moreover, it must be noted, as Houlden does, that the rear-guard was unsuccessful for the Fourth Gospel is captured by the Gnostics. This failure may in part be due to the intellectual calibre of the author who "Failed to exploit in his favour the rich Christological teaching of the Gospel,"<sup>(56)</sup> yet Houlden feels he is also to be complimented for holding to the reality of the humanity of Christ, and for asserting "The unfinished yet hopeful nature of the moral struggle."<sup>(57)</sup> All reconstructions are doubtful, this one is attractive, yet still doubtful!

Houlden dates the Epistle somewhere between the turn of the first century and 135 A.D., approximately in the middle of that period. Thus Houlden posits a Johannine community, out of step with 'mainstream' Christianity but sufficiently in contact with it for some to mount an attempt to restore their community to 'mainstream' Church life, whereas Dodd saw a community with one great figure in it who gave us the most



mature and complete expression of the one Christian Gospel. If the Epistle comes from this 'reactionary group' Houlden must explain why there is no reference to the Resurrection of Jesus,<sup>(58)</sup> whereas Dodd must explain why this important element is missing from the one Christian Kerygma in this epistle. Whereas Dodd saw mainly Hellenistic influences, Houlden believes that the author was much more open to Jewish influences.

Houlden, in his discussion of the structure of the Epistle, asserts that "No early Christian work is so repetitious, so monotonous in its grammatical constructions, so narrow in its vocabulary."<sup>(59)</sup> As others before him, Houlden uses terms like 'Spiral' or 'Cycle' to describe the structure. Dodd's suggestion of parallels between the sayings of Jesus, preserved notably in what we may, for the sake of convenience, call M, is favourably considered. Houlden suggests that, as in the Fourth Gospel, there "Is a kernel of saying or story,"<sup>(60)</sup> which is at the heart of the Gospel episode, so it is possible "That the sections of 1 John developed like snowballs from a beginning in the sayings of the kind found in the Gospels."<sup>(61)</sup> He knows that there are other possible explanations; there is gnomic and hortatory material yet "On any showing, 1 John is nothing like as simple in structure as a straightforward alternation of neatly balanced antithetical aphorisms and hortatory comment: the two styles are mixed together and constantly the structure of the aphorisms has been spoiled especially by introductory additions."<sup>(62)</sup> This raises the possibility of taking a theory like J.C. O'Neill's seriously. Houlden ultimately rejects it.

Although he rejects O'Neill's theory, it has the greatest merit of "Showing that the theological background is Jewish. It places 1 John among those many early Christian writings which, in a wide variety of ways, reflect the attempt to fix the boundary with Judaism and define the relationship between Synagogue and Church."<sup>(63)</sup> There is, then, a major difference between Dodd and Houlden over the background. He makes an implicit criticism of Dodd; "Whereas....it was possible and fashionable

in former days to seek the background of Johannine thought in the contemporary religious world of Greek paganism, it is clear that the heterodox and often highly speculative Jewish theology of the time affords closer parallels,"<sup>(64)</sup> Houlden's position owes much to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and much recent work on heterodox Jewish thought, yet he seems to have forgotten that there had been a number of scholars who had emphasised the Jewish background of Johannine theology.

Houlden then considers the nature of the heresies. He argues that the Fourth Gospel "Owes more to those who have gone into schism than to the conservatives who are left behind."<sup>(65)</sup> The essential heresy may be described as Gnostic/Docetic.<sup>(66)</sup> Here, then, is another discernible shift in critical opinion. Docetism is held to be compatible with an essentially Jewish theology; "Their (the Johannine community) kind of Christian faith, with its belief in a spiritual angelic saviour, is by no means unparalleled in the speculation of contemporary Judaism, nor is it hard to find examples of other Christians who shared this approach."<sup>(67)</sup> There is no possibility now of drawing the older and fast distinction between Hellenism and Judaism. Yet by way of anticipation, in two of the crucial passages that we shall discuss, Houlden sees Greek influence observing that "Jewish theology itself in this period was deeply influenced by the orientalised Hellenism of the day."<sup>(68)</sup>

Houlden sees few Greek members in John's Church; "If there are non-Jewish members of the Johannine Church, their theological influence remains in the background."<sup>(69)</sup> Whereas in the Gospel there is an interest in the Gentile mission - 12.20ff and 12.32 are interpreted in this way - no such interest may be found in the Epistle.

Even allowing for the complexity of the influence of orientalised Hellenism on Judaism, is Houlden's description too narrow? Moreover, is his dating of the Epistle compatible with its purpose of drawing the boundary between Church and Synagogue?.

The question of the common authorship of the Epistle and Gospel is reduced to the status of a short note. This indicates how far modern British scholarship, represented by Houlden, has moved away from the interest that dominated such scholarship in Brooke's day, when authenticity and value were so bound up with the issue of authorship. We are given an outline of the possibilities, a list of some of the protagonists and left to choose, in the knowledge that Houlden does not think that they came from the same pen. "1 John is then not a letter, it is a theological tract, modelled roughly on its congregation's existing production, the Fourth Gospel, especially in structure and terminology, and in the use and contents of the Prologue." (70)

#### C.H. Dodd's Commentary - Overview.

Dodd's commentary was published thirty-four years after Brooke's. Almost uniquely in Doddian writings there is a specific mention of those commentaries to which he is indebted. Brooke's introduction is singled out for special praise. Our initial intention is to summarise Dodd's introduction and make appropriate comparisons with Brooke. Dodd began by considering the Johannine Epistles in the early church. There is nothing at all remarkable in that discussion for our present concern.

The discussion becomes very significant when the background and setting of the Epistles is considered. The classical Doddian position discussed in the previous chapter was proposed. It does not require re-statement here. In this introduction he was, however, still operating with the wider understanding of Gnosticism, which characterised his work in the thirties, but which he was to abandon in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel". (71) He noted that it was in the period which historians could not penetrate, the 'tunnel period', that the rise of the Gnostic sects occurred and he suggested that "The First Epistle of John appears to reflect a critical moment at an early stage in the process." (72) At this stage in his career, Dodd of course, had no knowledge of sectarian

Judaism, such as Qumran was to provide, with which to compare this phenomenon. In his recovery and description of the teaching of the dissenters, Dodd saw its central characteristic in the denial of the reality of the Incarnation, which might be traced to both Docetic and Gnostic sources for, even if not all the expressions in the Epistle can be paralleled in Gnostic sources, they are closely analogous to Gnostic language "And taken together describe well enough the best type of Gnostic piety."<sup>(73)</sup>

Dodd observed, in his comparison of the Epistles and the Gospel with Higher Paganism, that "The religious quest of the Hellenistic world was not in vain. It attained some genuine religious insight, and it provided early Christian thinkers with an intellectual apparatus for interpreting Christianity to the wider world, and in doing so, penetrating more deeply into the meaning of the Gospel."<sup>(74)</sup> It must be asked whether this insistence on the necessity of Greek thought for the deeper understanding of the Gospel makes it very difficult for Dodd to see the Jewish influence in its proper place in the Johannine writings. To have seen this would have involved Dodd in a withdrawal from a major emphasis. It is just this refusal to withdraw that has made Dodd's position so awkward within the 'New Look', which he did so much to undergird. There is no suggestion in any of Dodd's writings that he could adjust his thinking on the background of the Johannine writings to meet results of recent scholarly work on the Jewish background. It is just as important to realise that he had not apparently taken seriously the work of scholars like Brooke, who had also stressed the importance of this Jewish background. He could not make this withdrawal because the picture of the evangelist, and the understanding of the purpose of the Fourth Gospel, and indeed its successful accomplishment of that purpose, had been a permanent part of his thought for so long.<sup>(75)</sup>

Dodd, like many scholars, noted that "The argument is not closely articulated."<sup>(76)</sup> He offered a three-fold division; "I. What is Christianity? I.5-ii.28., II. Life in the family of God. ii.29-iv.12., III. The

certainty of the Faith. iv.13-v.13."(77) There is an exordium, consisting of the first four verses, and a postscript consisting of the last eight. He maintained that "The immediate aim of this epistle....is to meet a critical situation arising out of the preaching of a distorted form of Christianity."(78) What is the relationship of this epistle to primitive Christianity and the one common Gospel? One of Dodd's major emphases has been this insistence on the unitive nature of early Christianity. This epistle presented a challenge for "It is not at first sight obvious to the reader that what the author is giving is in fact the common original Gospel of primitive Christianity."(79) The 'yardstick' by which the author's work will be judged had been set out in "The Apostolic Preaching and its development"; "It will therefore be of interest to confront the teaching of the Epistle with what we know of the early presentation of the Christian faith to the world."(80) Once Dodd had accomplished this, he argued that the author "Lives fully within this (that of the Apostolic preaching) eschatological faith,"(81) even though the expression of this one eschatological faith differs radically. Dodd went beyond the recognition that there was no quotation from the Old Testament in the Epistle suggesting that the author "Betrays virtually no interest in the Old Testament and no acquaintance with the contemporary thought of Judaism."(82) This statement about Judaism does not bear examination now; it is doubtful whether it could ever justifiably have been so baldly asserted. The main point is just how can such a work, if Dodd's description is accepted, be considered part of the common Christian preaching. In the light of Dodd's own study and conclusions in "According to the Scriptures", the position of the First Epistle seems very strange within the one common Christianity. There is only one reference to this epistle in that book, and frankly, the argument is strained. Discussing the prophecy of the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31. 31-34, Dodd saw four elements and among them an insistence on the knowledge of God. He notes that this is not directly referred to in the New Testament, "But it is perhaps hardly accidental

that in 1 John ii.12-24, which sets forth the features of a state of existence when 'the darkness is passing away and the light of reality is shining', couples together closely the knowledge of God and the forgiveness of sins" (the fourth element of the new covenant)."<sup>(83)</sup> Here, there is a pre-supposition in favour of the homogeneous nature of primitive Christianity and that inclusive understanding and use of background material to which Kysar drew attention. Dodd has over-emphasised the homogeneity of primitive Christianity. It is worth noting, in this context, that Dodd makes very little of the reference to Cain in 1 John 3.12.

Immediately, another Doddian emphasis comes to the fore. Not only does the author share the eschatological faith of the primitive community but also "He is very much alive to the historical actuality of the events in which that act of God was manifested."<sup>(84)</sup> This too, is overstressed. Certainly, the author writes, "We know that the Son of God has come", 5.20, and he insists upon the reality of the humanity of Jesus but, as Dodd has to admit, "Of the mighty works 'in the flesh' to which the kerygma seems to have alluded (Acts ii.22, x.38) our author has nothing to say; it was hardly germane to his purpose."<sup>(85)</sup> Dodd similarly, on the one hand, claims "In all this our author keeps closely to the forms of the primitive preaching",<sup>(86)</sup> yet on the other, he draws our attention to a peculiarity which our author shares with the author of The Epistle to the Hebrews, in that he makes no direct allusion to the resurrection of Jesus.<sup>(87)</sup>

Yet another Doddian emphasis is thrown back into the kerygma. He noted our author's insistence upon the authority of the teaching of Jesus, a feature that is rare in the kerygma, being mentioned specifically only in Acts 3.22.

"This comparative silence, however, must not be misunderstood to mean that the primitive Church was not interested in the teaching of Jesus. It is evident from the whole (my italics) New Testament that the message of the Church was conceived as having two main aspects: the Gospel of Christ, the theme of preaching

(Kerygma) and the Law or Commandment of Christ, the theme of teaching (Didache)."(88)

What Dodd asserted of the New Testament, and notably of this epistle, "In the First Epistle of John there is a thorough integration of the Commandment and the Gospel,"(89) was very true of him as a man. Dillistone writes " No one can ever have had a keener sense of the moral demand of Christianity than Dodd"(90) whilst his keen interest in the kerygma is shown in so many of his works. Although this is laudable, it does seem that again, Dodd has found what was congenial to him and to have claimed it as characteristic of the whole of primitive Christianity.(91)

There is one aspect in which the First Epistle does reflect the common Kerygma whilst knowing nothing of the Fourth Evangelist's reinterpretation; "The author of the First Epistle knows nothing of this (the Fourth Gospel's) reinterpretation of the Advent hope."(92) The significance of this will be discussed in another context, but maybe Dodd is disclosing his uneasiness with Apocalyptic at this point and nothing more. Similarly, the Epistle's understanding of the people of God is among the most primitive in the New Testament. The problem that arises for Dodd is, why in these two specific areas the author should have retained primitive understandings when, as such, they would presumably not have been welcomed by a community that had received more 'advanced' teachings.

Thus Dodd concludes that,

"While the First Epistle of John is written in a peculiar idiom both of thought and speech, showing the undeniable influence of the Hellenistic environment, its author is justified in claiming that the substance of his message to his readers is neither more nor less than the original and unchanging content of the Church's common faith, embodied in the Gospel and Commandment, and attested by primary witnesses."(93)

How many Doddian emphases are herein contained! As many had characterised

him, Dodd saw the author as a pastor. It is to the Fourth Gospel that we must look for the distinctively Johannine theology.

For the sake of completeness, to draw attention to a feature discussed elsewhere, Dodd suggested that our author had knowledge of a body of the sayings of Jesus similar to that of the Synoptics, and having most in common with what is traditionally described as 'M'. Interestingly, he did not return to this suggestion in "Historical tradition in the Fourth Gospel", presumably because this would have called into question the independence of the Johannine tradition.<sup>(94)</sup>

Dodd then discussed the relationship of the First Epistle to the Fourth Gospel, a sketch of the main argument will be given here. He accepted a general affinity, but argued that the differences of style and vocabulary, demonstrated in his earlier article in "The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library", were crucial. In that article, he thought that he had avoided the subjectivity that was the bane of such investigations. In the crucial area of ideas he found significant differences. For the most part these had the force of demonstrating the Hellenistic colouring of the Epistle, much more so than in the Gospel.<sup>(95)</sup> He also noted that there were elements that suggested a "Theological outlook nearer than that of the Gospel to primitive Christianity."<sup>(96)</sup> These were not unimportant areas for they concerned the Church, Eschatology and the Holy Spirit. It is significant that Dodd suggested 'Primitive' or 'Popular' Christianity. Why not 'Jewish Christianity'? This will be discussed later, but is this equivalent to a 'Freudian slip'? There are now problems concerning the description 'Jewish Christianity' but at the time of the publication of this commentary it would have been a natural enough description.

Dodd concluded that the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle were by different authors, the priority being with the Gospel, Brooke's discussion being decisive here. The disciple of the Evangelist, then, is responsible for the Epistle but in three important areas, at least, his thought



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represents a marked decline from that of his master. The alternative, which Dodd rejected because the Epistle in important areas pre-supposes the Gospel, is that, if one were prepared to accept that the Fourth Gospel were the work of various hands, the author of the Epistles might have had a hand in the composition of the Gospel. As we have seen, Dodd had by now rejected any such possibility. This discussion was placed last, indicating the then Doddian emphasis that the question of authorship is not of vital importance. The Epistle, dated somewhere between 96-110, coming from Asia Minor, "Represents a definite stage towards the central or normative Christianity which emerged from the New Testament period." (97)

#### The Relationship of the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle.

Dodd realised that, in re-opening the question of identity of authorship, he was going very much against the tide of critical opinion; "In this country, especially since the discussion by Charles in his commentary on the Apocalypse (I.C.C.) and by Dr. Brooke in his commentary on the Johannine Epistles (in the same series), the identity of authorship is generally regarded as chose jugée." (98) Here, then, Dodd was consciously innovative. In this whole area there are very fine judgements to be made, and the experts often disagree. It appears as though there are no precise objective criteria available, all scholars ultimately, make subjective value judgements. (99) Moreover, the statistical data, once presented, can be very widely interpreted.

Howard was impressed by Dodd's case. (100) Barrett maintains that Howard's article contains an impartial statement of Dodd's position as well as arguing his own case. In his introduction, Howard warned of the difficulties of making any significant comparison since the Gospel is probably the end product of a long process of compilation, whereas the Epistle was in all probability written for a specific occasion, the subject matter of the Gospel is wider, the Evangelist may have drawn

upon sources, and this may well account for the Aramaisms of the Gospel, and we must reckon with the degree of freedom given to an amanuensis. For his part, Dodd acknowledged the thoroughness of Brooke's work.

There is no firm evidence that Dodd was influenced by Howard's paper, although it was delivered in 1939. There is evidence that he revised his argument slightly; "Subsequent revision has shown that the word-lists and statistics given there (in the article in B.J.R.L.) need minor corrections. These do not, however, affect the general conclusion; on balance, they slightly strengthen the evidence for a significant difference of style between the two writings."<sup>(101)</sup>

#### The Argument from Language.

It is not possible to review this argument section by section. Thus, the prominent parts of Dodd's arguments will be summarised along with the appropriate comments of Howard and W.G. Wilson. Whilst the inevitable subjectivity has been acknowledged, a notable feature of the arguments is the attempt to give an appearance of objectivity by the use of statistics. The interpretation of the statistical data varied from scholar to scholar, indicating a good deal of subjectivity in the assessment of this allegedly 'objective' evidence.

Dodd presented the first part of his argument under the heading of "Grammatical words and particles", subdivided into prepositions, adverbial particles and conjunctive particles. He concludes that "It is clear that the Gospel is much richer in particles than the Epistles. The statistics confirm the impression that the style of the Epistle is more monotonous and less flexible."<sup>(102)</sup> When stated statistically the evidence is impressive. The Epistle has 14 prepositions, the Gospel has all of these except 1, and an additional 10; the Epistle has 9 adverbial particles, whilst the Gospel has all those contained there and 27 in addition, the Epistle includes 18 conjunctive particles whereas the Gospel has 17 of these, and an additional 19.<sup>(103)</sup> This evidence is interpreted

very differently by W.G. Wilson. He contended that the number of prepositions used in any New Testament book varies according to the length of the book. Thus he presented a table in which the first column gave the number of pages in the WH text of the New Testament, the second column indicated the number of different prepositions used, the third the total number of prepositions, and the final column the average number of prepositions per page.<sup>(104)</sup> It is apparent that only the Gospels, all over 40 pages long, have more than 20 prepositions and that no book of less than 8 pages - 1 John has 7.5 pages - has more than 16. Wilson argues that we just should not expect to find as many prepositions in the Epistle as in the Gospel. Presumably the narrative form of the Gospel makes for richer use of prepositions. Just as telling is Wilson's observation that of the 19 prepositions used in 1 Corinthians only 14 are used in 2 Thessalonians and 10 in Philemon. Moreover, since Dodd had argued that all three Johannine Epistles come from the same pen, giving a total of 9.5 pages, if these are compared with the Fourth Gospel, then only 8 prepositions found in the Gospel are not used in the Epistle; of these, three are rare.<sup>(105)</sup>

Much the same may be said of Dodd's argument based on the use of particles. There are fewer particles in the First Epistle, but Howard argued that a number of the particles in the Gospel were used locally or temporally, a usage that is as appropriate in the Gospel, as inappropriate in the Epistle. A further 2 are used imperatively and 2 in the dialogues with Nicodemus and Pilate. This by itself is damaging to an argument which consisted for the most part in just positing statistical data and not weighing usage. Moreover, Wilson handled this evidence in exactly the same way as he had handled the evidence based on prepositions. He showed that "The number of these particles in any New Testament book varies greatly according to the length of the book."<sup>(106)</sup> It is also evident from Wilson's tables,

"That the same author may, within limits, use a considerably

greater number of different particles in one work than he does in another. We have also seen that in the use of particles there are greater variations between some of the epistles generally accepted on linguistic (and other) evidence as being the work of Paul than the variations which Dr. Dodd uses as evidence against the common authorship of the Gospel and 1 John."<sup>(107)</sup>

Dodd moved on to compare the use of the compound verbs. 1 John has a total of 11 and the Gospel 105, including 9 of those used in 1 John. He argued "This result confirms that of our investigation of the use of particles, namely that the style of the Gospel is richer, more varied and more flexible than that of the epistle."<sup>(108)</sup> Howard was content to assert that "The vastly wider range of subject-matter in historical narrative gives the Gospel unquestionably a richer vocabulary."<sup>(109)</sup> This is confirmed by Wilson who yet again demonstrated the decisive importance of the length of the books. Two interesting observations were made by Wilson,

"Firstly, in the column headed "Proportion of different compound verbs per page", the result is, that the Gospel has 1.92 and 1 John 1.46. This difference is smaller than that between some of the Pauline epistles and so, placed in a wider context, Dodd's argument does not seem very impressive.

Secondly, whilst there is no doubt that the average number of compound verbs per page is much higher in the Fourth Gospel than in 1 John - 9.5 as against 2.9 - it might well be argued that a feature of Johannine style is a disinclination to use compound verbs since the average number of compound verbs per page in the Synoptics and the Acts of the Apostles is 17.8."<sup>(110)</sup>

It is notoriously difficult to weigh this sort of evidence; maybe the most that can be said is, that many of the compound verbs used in the New Testament are more suited to narrative than to discourse and epistle.

Dodd then considered the use of idioms and rhetorical figures. What was so confidently asserted by Dodd, looks appreciably weaker on

examination by Howard and Wilson. Howard made the point that,

"Dr. Dodd refers to the list which A.E. Brooke supplies of phrases common to the Gospel and First Epistle. In its impressiveness it overwhelms the examples of contrast which have just been examined. To appreciate the degree of resemblance in phraseology the imposing list of over 50 phrases, set out in parallel columns for the Gospel and First Epistle, should be studied in the I.C.C. Johanne Epistles."<sup>(111)</sup>

Dodd offered five peculiarities.<sup>(112)</sup> It might well be argued that some of these are indeed appropriate to the epistolary form.

Howard was more impressed by Dodd's contentions about Aramaisms than was Wilson. Implicitly Howard accepted Dodd's contention that there are no Aramaisms in the First Epistle. He sought explanation in terms of the Gospel's use of a Palestinian tradition. Wilson noted that 3 of the Aramaisms found by Dodd in the Gospel were in the sayings of Jesus, 1 was regarded by M. Black as doubtful, 1 was regarded by Dodd as doubtful, - in his commentary Dodd had said there were "At least five" Aramaisms,<sup>(113)</sup> and the last has a parallel in the best manuscripts of 1 John 5.9. He concluded,

"If we accept Dr. Black's thesis that 'all four Evangelists incorporate in their own literary work a translated or 'targumized' tradition of the (Aramaic) sayings of Jesus, and perhaps also of the Gospel dialogue of Jesus' many interlocutors, and other non-Dominical oratio recta', then we may have the explanation of the presence in the Gospel of Aramaisms which are not found in 1 John."<sup>(114)</sup>

This is an exceptionally difficult area for the non-specialist who must content himself with indicating that the debate is not yet over. Dodd's position has come under increasing attack. K. Beyer examined the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle. As his argument is summarised by A.J.B. Higgins, "Beyer regards as the most significant result of his

investigation the presence of more definite Hebraisms than Aramaisms in the Johannine gospel and epistles. These writings are under predominantly Hebrew influence."<sup>(115)</sup> In this article, Higgins wondered whether Dodd had made a tacit withdrawal between his article in B.J.R.L., and the publication of his commentary. In the article Dodd argued that the Epistle bears 'no trace' of Aramaism whereas in the commentary he wrote of "The lack of 'definable Semitism' and of the absence of clear traces of semitism,"<sup>(116)</sup> but certainly contrary to either of Dodd's contentions is Beyer's; he finds 52 semitisms in 1 John, 6 in 2 John and 3 in 3 John. At this point, one recalls Moulton's comment; what a marked contrast between Mancunian scholarship at these two periods. It would appear that the debate is still open.

Dodd's work encouraged T.W. Manson to examine the data. His examination was based on Burney's work in "The Aramaic origin of the Fourth Gospel", 1922. Manson noted that the Aramaisms are "Not evenly distributed throughout the Gospel,"<sup>(117)</sup> but are found in blocks. He accepted the Manchester Hellenistic Seminar's conclusions that there are no semitisms in 1 John, but he did not argue from this for a different author for the First Epiistle. He went on to argue that 16 out of the 20 quotations from the Old Testament found in the Fourth Gospel are in the Aramaising section of the Gospel. Thus, he argued that,

"Some of the most striking differences between the Gospel and the Epistle turn out on closer examination to be differences between the Aramaising half of the Gospel and the Epistle; and it is open to us to entertain the hypothesis that the Epistle is the work of the writer freely composing and the Gospel the work of the same writer with his style to some extent controlled by the material he has to incorporate into his book."<sup>(118)</sup>

Whatever may be made of this hypothesis, and it is open to severe criticism if Beyer's contention be true, Manson provided another example of how the data provided by Dodd looks so different from another perspective.

Two concluding observations may be offered. It is a matter of fine judgement whether the significance of similarity of style outweighs that of difference. In 1961, Kilpatrick contributed a short note to the Journal of Theological Studies, entitled "Two Johannine idioms in the Johannine Epistles."<sup>(119)</sup> He argues that in the Gospel "ἀληθινός was used attributively and ἀληθής predicatively without any real difference of meaning":<sup>(120)</sup> this is true also of the Epistle. The second point concerns the use of ἀποστελλεῖν and πέμπειν. The Gospel uses both, the latter 32 times, whereas the Epistle only uses the former. Kilpatrick argues that "What would be significant would be an example where ἀποστελλεῖν was used in the epistles where the gospel would use πέμπειν. This we do not have."<sup>(121)</sup> He was impressed by the first idiom; it is not to be found elsewhere in the New Testament, "A fact which makes the agreement between John and the Johannine epistles even more noteworthy."<sup>(122)</sup> The other consideration concerns the Evangelist's apparent love of sheer variation. E.D. Freed has suggested this. Having presented a list of variations in the language and thought of John, the concluding question of the article is, "Could it be that the writer was more concerned with the art of sheer variation than with historical accuracy and theological consistency?"<sup>(123)</sup> It is outside the scope of this chapter to assess this thesis but, since this possibility can be seriously canvassed, is it wise to draw any conclusions from difference of style? Some modern scholars do not; neither Houlden, who accepts duality of authorship, nor Schnackenburg assert that such differences are sufficient to prove this duality. Wilson's comment is appropriate,

"The importance of the foregoing evidence will be estimated differently by different minds. But it appears to indicate that Dr. Dodd's evidence of difference in style between the Fourth Gospel and 1 John is not sufficient to give rise to such 'misgivings about the common authorship of the two works' as he suggests, It is surely unscientific to suggest that the mind of 1 John was

incapable of such variations as are manifested in the ten epistles attributed to Saint Paul."<sup>(124)</sup>

Yet is it scientific to assume that the author was of such a flexible turn of mind as Paul? In this area, as in so many, pre-suppositions about the author seem to be the dominant factors, and despite the use of statistical evidence, much still seems too subjective. In 1944 the Cambridge statistician, G.U. Yule, in "The Statistical Study of Literary Vocabulary" argued that to obtain reliable data the works under review must be at least 10,000 words long. The Johannine Epistles fall far short of this minimum requirement.

#### The Argument from Vocabulary.

Dodd knew that too much could not be built on this argument. "In view of the much greater length of the Gospel and the variety of its themes, we shall be prepared to find that its vocabulary is very much more extensive. And so it is."<sup>(125)</sup> The strength of the argument lies in the fact "That there are certain words or groups of words which are either so frequent in the Gospel, or so intimately connected with leading Johannine ideas, that their absence from the Epistle is remarkable."<sup>(126)</sup> Dodd provides a list in six parts:- (1) General religious and theological terms. (2) References to the O.T. and Jewish background. (3) Terms referring to the idea of judgement. (4) Christological terms. (5) Terms special to Johannine theology. (6) Other terms characteristic of the Fourth Gospel."<sup>(127)</sup> The list totals 33 words; Dodd asked,

"Is it likely....that this author should have written a second work upon some of the central Christian themes, without using the words which came so easily to him for the ideas of being saved and lost, for grace and peace, for divine judgement, for the divine necessity (δεῖ), for 'bearing fruit' in Christian living - without referring to Christ as Lord, to His Glory, to His descent and ascent, or to the resurrection - without ever falling into such familiar expressions as πέρπειν, ζητεῖν or φιλεῖν and φίλος?"<sup>(128)</sup>



Obviously the question expects a negative answer. In addition there are no fewer than 39 words in the Epistle which do not occur in the Fourth Gospel. There is no doubt that this list is impressive.

Neither Howard nor Wilson were impressed once they had subjected the argument to examination. Howard argued "But I have to acknowledge that after testing it (the list) with the concordance with some care I found that it assumed a less formidable appearance."<sup>(129)</sup> He argued two considerations; we must bear in mind "(a) the distribution throughout the Gospel, and (b) the relevance of such words to the subject-matter and purpose of the Epistle."<sup>(130)</sup> It is impossible to demonstrate the use of these criteria for many of the words in the list; one sample must suffice.

"In class (iv), Christological terms, we admit that it is surprising that  $\delta\omicron\varsigma\chi\alpha$  (18 times) and the corresponding verb  $\delta\omicron\varsigma\chi\alpha\lambda\epsilon\iota\nu$  (21 times) should not be found in the Epistle. Perhaps we should notice that 19 times the verb is spoken by Jesus (or by the Father to the Son), twice it is used of the death of Jesus, and in xxi.19 of the death of Peter. But when we are told that  $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$  is used of Christ 41 times in the Gospel, it ought to have been explained that in 31 instances the word is used in the vocative, which rules out three-fourths of the examples from any comparison with the Epistle."<sup>(131)</sup> There remains something impressive about the list, even if Howard's judgment that, as it stands, it is not sufficient to prove difference of authorship is correct.<sup>(132)</sup>

Manson examined this list from a different perspective. He accepted Howard's argument and removed  $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$  from the list. He checked the occurrence of these words in the Aramaising and non-Aramaising sections of the Gospel and in every case except one, they appear much more frequently in the Aramaising section of the Gospel. Manson suggested that this confirmed the division of the Gospel into Aramaising and non-Aramaising sections and again the significant difference is between the First Epistle and the

Aramaising section of the Gospel.<sup>(133)</sup> This is another example of how Dodd's data required more examination.

Wilson's examination was differently aimed, again it centres around the importance of the length of documents. The ten Pauline Epistles aggregate 104 pages in the WH text, less than twice the number of WH pages for the Fourth Gospel, "Yet a great many of the words in question occur more than twice (italicized) as often in the ten Pauline epistles, and may therefore be regarded as equally Pauline as they are Johannine."<sup>(134)</sup> He argued that "We would not expect to find two Pauline Epistles, one of which contained all, and the other none, of these words."<sup>(135)</sup> To the words in question, Wilson added ten characteristically Pauline words, taken from R.M. Pope's "Studies in the language of St. Paul". When the Pauline corpus is examined on this basis there is found to be a greater variation between 1 Corinthians and Philippians than between the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle. He concluded "Thus, it would appear that the number of important terms used in any particular book varies according to the length and subject-matter of the book."<sup>(136)</sup>

The only verdict that may be returned is an open one. It appears as though Dodd has over-stated his case. One weakness is that all of this published discussion occurred after Dodd's seminal article and commentary on the Johannine Epistles. Dodd has not found it necessary to reply to his critics; their assessments deserved such a reply, but by this time Dodd was pursuing other interests.

#### The Argument from Thought.

Dodd's argument in terms of the understanding of atonement, eschatology and the Holy Spirit will be outlined and discussed in the light of Howard's examination. Some specific passages will be evaluated in the context of Dodd's and Houlden's commentaries. Finally, in this section Robinson's two articles will be examined in the context of the Qumran discoveries and as an example of how Dodd's position looks now, with

particular reference to the question of how Jewish the Johannine Epistles are.

Again, Howard was impressed by Dodd's statement of his case; "Dr. Dodd in his essay has presented that side of the case with unsurpassed skill, and now in his latest commentary some of the most important passages have been more fully expounded in relation to their historical background. Gratitude is due for the clarity with which he has set out the respects in which the two writings are at variance."<sup>(137)</sup> Very early in his discussion, having repeated his assertion that there is no Jewish element in 1 John, Dodd noted that the passages in the Gospel, which are most like the Epistle, have few quotations from the Old Testament.<sup>(138)</sup> He did not probe this evidence in a way similar to Manson; indeed, as we have argued, it would have been impossible for Dodd to have done so at this stage in his career.

The first argument is in terms of the eschatological teaching of the Epistle compared to that of the Fourth Gospel. He repeated his typical understanding of the eschatological teaching of the Gospel.<sup>(139)</sup> In contrast with this "In the Epistle...the eschatological hope is fully alive."<sup>(140)</sup> Brooke had already argued that to make this point, involved looking at only part of the evidence. Howard took up this point strongly;

"It must, however, be pointed out that there is a strongly eschatological element in the Fourth Gospel. Jesus as Son of Man is commissioned with the functions of Judge and Giver of life.... Such sayings as 'I will raise him up at the last day', the thrice-repeated promise in chapter xiv - incidentally one of the chapters that Dodd noted most like the Epistle - 'I come again', and 'If I will that he tarry till I come' must not be ignored."<sup>(141)</sup>

Dodd argued that "The Epistle indeed shares the common conviction of all N.T. writers that the Age to Come has begun, and like the Gospel, it affirms that the believer already possesses eternal life. But unlike the Gospel it remains bound to the time-scheme of popular eschatology."<sup>(142)</sup>

In an explanation that in part drew on Dodd's article Howard wrote, "It is the appalling spectacle of successful apostasy that revives the memory of warnings of false prophets who would lead many astray. In earlier Christian teaching this was to be one of the tribulations that would herald the Parousia, marking the darkest hour before the dawn."<sup>(143)</sup> For Dodd this is an 'Eschatological myth'<sup>(144)</sup> that is either ignored, or radically re-interpreted, by the Evangelist. Two points may be made. Firstly, in Howard's words Dodd's position "Assumes too rigid a uniformity on the part of the religious teacher, and it overlooks the effect which a particular and critical historical situation may have upon the presentation of a doctrine."<sup>(145)</sup> Secondly, Dodd's position here seems to imply a radical withdrawal from his understanding of the homogeneity of early Christianity, for this, eschatological hope is on any showing an important element in so many New Testament writings. Dodd's understanding of the nature of the Christian tradition allows for the same author to use different elements from it, not so apparently here. Further, as noted earlier, Dodd suggested, on rather slender evidence, that the author of 1 John knew of, and used, the prophecy of the New covenant. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Dodd can find evidence for those elements of Christianity that he found personally satisfying in peculiar places, and that, due to his own uneasiness with apocalyptic eschatology, he could not find this in the most mature expression of the Christian Gospel.

Howard was no more convinced by Dodd's argument from the understanding of the atonement. To summarise Dodd's argument in his own words,

"The death of Christ in the Epistle is interpreted as an ἔλασμος for the sin of the world (.2.2), much as Paul describes it as ἔλασσηρ....In the Fourth Gospel the death of Christ is first and foremost—that by which Christ is 'glorified' or 'exalted' (12,23, 32-33; 13.3) and by virtue of which he 'draws' all men into the sphere of eternal life (12.32; 11.52)....The only passage which

might reasonably be adduced in support of any doctrine of expiation is that which speaks of Christ as 'the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world' - he offered his usual understanding of this concept - ....If, however, we do not interpret the Lamb of God as an expiatory offering, then the idea of expiation never occurs in the Fourth Gospel. But this is the doctrine of the Epistle, which in this respect moves on a different level of thought, nearer to that of general early Christian belief."<sup>(146)</sup>

Dodd can again be criticised in terms of his understanding of the homogeneous nature of primitive Christianity. At how many points can the Fourth Gospel not include elements of this and still be part of that homogeneous primitive Christianity? Dodd's position here seems inconsistent. Even leaving this aside, there is little doubt that Howard's criticism is damaging to Dodd's position. Not considering Dodd's contentious understanding of the Lamb of God, Howard argued,

"As regards the death of Christ, there is no clear doctrine of the Atonement in any of the Johannine writings. The metaphors are indeed different but is not the underlying conception the same? Dr. Dodd has himself done more than any other scholar to prove that *ἵλασμος* means not propitiation but expiation, the removal of the infection of sin that keeps man away from fellowship with God. Whatever original conception may lie behind the figure of the Lamb of God in John 1.29, He is there 'to take away the sin of the world'. So in 1 John 3.5 'Ye know that He was manifested to take away sins.' To clinch the matter we have but to set side by side John 3.16, 1 John 4.9f and 2.2."<sup>(147)</sup>

Howard asked searching questions of Dodd which he was not to answer.

Similar arguments are rehearsed about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Dodd stressed that "The Fourth Evangelist has a very distinctive doctrine of the Holy Spirit."<sup>(148)</sup> Whilst he might, on occasions, use *πνεῦμα* in the sense in which it was used in the Old Testament and

generally in the early Church, "In the closing discourses of the Fourth Gospel the Spirit is more unequivocally personal than anywhere else in the New Testament. He is, so to speak, Christ's alter ego, in whom Christ Himself returns to His people."<sup>(149)</sup> He reminded us that "The Epistle, on the other hand, applies the term  $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\kappa\lambda\eta\rho\omicron\varsigma$  to Christ alone, and uses the term 'pneuma' in a way which approximates to popular usage as we know it from Paul and the Acts."<sup>(150)</sup> Contrariwise, Howard cites E.F. Scott's understanding that,

" 'So far from conflicting with that of the Gospel the doctrine of the Epistle is in full harmony with it and serves to elucidate and define it.' Certainly it would be hard to find any words more truly in keeping with the teaching of the farewell discourse than the two verses 'Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he gave us', 'Hereby we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit', (1 John iii,24; iv.13)."<sup>(151)</sup>

This is a much more finely balanced case than that of the Atonement, and Howard's argument is possibly an example of that 'Harmonising interpretation',<sup>(152)</sup> against which Dodd warned.

Howard observed "It is strange that the final argument should be that the Epistle stands nearer than the Gospel to Gnosticism which is at the farthest removed from primitive Christianity, whilst it has just been described as nearer than the Gospel to the Judaic theology of the early days."<sup>(153)</sup> Two initial points must be made; firstly, Dodd did not use the term 'Judaic' and secondly, both Dodd and Howard writing before the Qumran discoveries, have a defective understanding of the presence of gnosis in sectarian Judaism and Christianity. Dodd argued that, although the Epistle was closer to Gnosticism - understood by Dodd in the wider sense here - than the Gospel, the author was "At least in intention, using the weapons of the heretics against themselves."<sup>(154)</sup> Whereas the Evangelist had mastered these alien elements "In the Epistle

primitive Christian and 'Gnostic' ways of thought and expression lie side by side."<sup>(155)</sup> This is an antithesis that cannot now be maintained. Moreover, it would appear that Dodd's picture of the Evangelist lies behind the value judgment. In the context of the time in which the two scholars were writing, Howard's question remains pertinent, for would the author, who failed to master completely these alien gnostic elements, have been one for whom 'popular' eschatology, for example, was attractive?

The Argument from Thought: some specific examples from the text.

"God is light and in him there is no darkness at all", 1.5 (R.S.V.).

Where is this message to be found? Dodd argued that "It is not in the Synoptic Gospels, nor in Paul, nor in the Fourth Gospel. On the other hand, it is a commonplace of current Hellenistic religious thought, deriving from an amalgam of Platonism and Zoroastrianism."<sup>(156)</sup> Dodd was impressed by the author stating the maxim in the form in which Philo first expressed it, although he was later to qualify this, guarding against too definite an identification of God with light. In the Fourth Gospel, Dodd argued, that it was the Logos that is the 'true light' but he does not mention that in the Gospel "The Word was God." Interestingly, he allowed for the influence of Jewish thought in the Gospel; "Christ in his incarnate life is described (in terms borrowed from Jewish language glorifying the Temple and the Law) as 'The Light of the World'."<sup>(157)</sup> Thus in the earlier article Dodd understood this maxim totally in Hellenistic terms, but in the later commentary there is acknowledgment of a wider background, including Psalm 27.1 "The Lord is my light and my salvation." The slant of the argument is still to emphasise the Hellenistic generally and the Hermetica specifically. In a disappointing discussion, Brooke mentioned none of these points; the only mention of gnostics is negative.<sup>(158)</sup> The impact of the Qumran discoveries may be seen in Houlden's discussion; it is harder to think of a closer parallel than 1QS 111;

"Those born of truth spring from a fountain of light, but those born of falsehood spring from a source of darkness. All the children of righteousness are ruled by the Prince of Light and walk in the ways of light; but all the children of darkness are ruled by the Angel of darkness and walk in the ways of darkness." Houlden did not deny that the maxim was a commonplace in Hellenistic religious thought. Dodd's case is not unassailable and the difference between the Epistle and the Gospel is not that vast.

"We know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is", 3.2 (R.S.V.).

This is a significant example for Dodd argued that

"Certain passages in the New Testament may, no doubt, be cited which might constructively be held to justify the statement, but we shall nowhere find this precise inference; we shall see Him as He is: therefore we shall be like Him. It is, however, an inference readily drawn within the universe of discourse of Hellenistic mysticism, which holds as one of its fundamental doctrines that vision or knowledge of God, as He truly is, makes man divine (Corp. Herm. 1.26 etc)."<sup>(159)</sup>

For Dodd this was a clear indication of where the Epistle stood closer than the Gospel to Gnosticism. Other commentators, however, had no difficulty in finding the universe of discourse within the Christian tradition. Howard suggested that "At least the idea must have been familiar ever since Paul wrote 2 Cor. iii.18 (cf Rom. viii. 29-30). It is hard to think that the Fourth Evangelist was incapable of applying this great Christian conception as it appears in the Epistle."<sup>(160)</sup> Brooke had cited 2 Cor. 3.18 and also Colossians 3.4 and Houlden, whilst not underestimating the Hellenistic influence, also refers us to the text from 2 Cor.<sup>(161)</sup> Dodd in his commentary, argued that the author "Is naturalising within Christian theology a widely diffused mystical tradition."<sup>(162)</sup> This may be so and indeed some of the New Testament verses cited so confidently a few years ago may themselves be subject to gnostic influence. Dodd, as on many



previous occasions despite his understanding of one common Christian tradition, in the interests of a theory of the relationship of the Epistle to Hellenism and to the Fourth Gospel, had opted for a much narrower understanding of that tradition here. Moreover, the picture of the Fourth Evangelist as the one who could Christianise Hellenistic elements is implicit here; "The Fourth Gospel, however, does not hold out the prospect of becoming like Christ through the vision of Him in His true Being."<sup>(163)</sup>

"No one born of God commits sin; for God's nature abides in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God." 3.9. (R.S.V.).

A much stronger case can be made out for Hellenistic influence here. Much of it centres on the use of σπέρμα, which is not mentioned in the Fourth Gospel. Brooke's discussion was slight; he barely explored the possible background and he mentioned Augustine's understanding of the 'seed' as the Word of God only to reject it. Similarly, Houlden's discussion is slight, the footnote assumes the correctness of an argument like Dodd's,

"We saw (pp.88f) that the affiliations of the idea of rebirth are Hellenistic and Gnostic. The same is true of this aspect in particular. It is to be found in the Corp. Herm. 13.2, from almost two centuries after our writer, and already in Philo, from some decades before. This Jewish writer, much influenced by Hellenistic thought of a kind that contributed to Gnosticism, could say of the people of Israel that 'their bodies were formed of human seeds, but their souls from divine' (Life of Moses 1.279)."<sup>(164)</sup>

In the article Dodd concluded "My object in tracing the development of this doctrine in the Hermetica, Philo and the Gnostics, was to suggest that the doctrines of Valentinus and the passing allusion in the Epistle alike presuppose a familiar background in which the idea of divine sperma was present."<sup>(165)</sup> In his commentary, he noted a possible wider background, within the New Testament, James 1.18 and 1 Peter 1.23-25, where

the seed is identified with the Word of God and suggested "It does not, of course, follow that our author shared the 'Gnostic' metaphysics; for his thought, however influenced by Hellenistic ideas, is rooted in the authentic Christian tradition."<sup>(166)</sup> Dodd's argument is stronger here than that of those who looked to Qumran as the background. There is something 'forced' about Boismard's conclusion that "Even if the author of 1 John does not exactly use the vocabulary of the scrolls he uses the essential theme of the struggle between the two angels."<sup>(167)</sup> Howard, equally interestingly, did not subject this argument to scrutiny beyond suggesting that the 'seed' might have been a favourite term of the heretics.

The final example is "The cryptic allusions to the 'anointing' (*Χρισμα*) in 2.20, 27."<sup>(168)</sup> This is interpreted from within a Biblical framework by Brooke, "Under the new dispensation the special gift, which in old times was bestowed on the few, is the common possession of all."<sup>(169)</sup> Houlden's explanation is much closer to Dodd's;

"The background of the thought is not the Hebrew and primitive Christian idea of the Messianic consecration, but the rituals of anointing such as we know it to have been employed in some pagan mysteries. The writer appears to claim that only those who have undergone this special initiation are worthy to be called Christians. Language of this kind could be taken over by orthodox writers."<sup>(170)</sup>

Like Dodd, he cites the example of Ignatius. Thus, there is evidence to support Dodd's contention that "The term is introduced, like sperma, as though it were a technical term whose meaning would be recognised at once by the readers. Moreover, in each case where it appears, there is a contrast between the heretical teachers and the readers of the Epistle, sharpened by the emphatic use of *ὑμεῖς*."<sup>(171)</sup> Even here, the decisive point comes implicitly from an analysis of the situation within the Johannean community and not from any understanding of whether the thought, as

such, would have been possible for the Evangelist. Whilst Howard did not discuss the anointing in any detail, simply mentioning that it was a favourite term of the heretics, his understanding that a particular historical crisis can effect the presentation of doctrine is again valuable here, although Dodd seems to have located the background of the idea accurately. The question remains whether the Fourth Evangelist himself would have been capable of using such an idea and this question can only be solved on the basis of a picture of his work in the Fourth Gospel. There seems no significant evidence to suggest that he was incapable of borrowing such ideas and Christianising them.

#### The Argument from Thought: Robinson - A Case Study.

This will not only show movement in one scholar's thought, but afford a comparison with Dodd. Robinson argued that the Fourth Gospel is an appeal to Greek-speaking Judaism and that 1 John comes from the same pen for the same community to reassure the faithful. He accepted the priority of the Gospel and argued for a considerable lapse of time between it and the First Epistle, probably a decade or two, and he dated it at the end of the first century. He found the absence of any Old Testament quotation interesting, but suggested that such quotations might have been inappropriate to a community whose danger is "That they will 'go ahead' (2 John 9) and become so progressive that they end up outside the pale of both Judaism and of Christianity."<sup>(172)</sup> Cain, moreover, could hardly be taken as a warning by those who did not know the Old Testament. Like others, Robinson noted that there was no interest in the Gentiles in the Epistle; for him this was a point of similarity with the Gospel, whereas for Houlden it was a difference. He referred to Dodd's three points of doctrinal difference and emphasised that they "Are all on the side of giving the Epistles more rather than less of a Jewish ring."<sup>(173)</sup> He wondered why they had not been recognised as such and argued that this was probably due to Harnack's understanding of the sort of 'advanced' community we see here as part of the 'Acute Hellenising' of Christianity.

He wondered whether Harnack's description was correct and, if it was, could such a movement only take place on Gentile soil, and finally, whether it was conceivable that the author would move some appreciable distance in the direction of the errors he wished to combat. He did not doubt that the author was dealing with a sort of incipient gnosticism, but maintained that the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls meant that we can place both the Johannine and Qumranic writings within a movement that can properly be called 'pre-gnostic'. Many of the 'heretical' movements glimpsed within the New Testament are characterised by this 'pre-gnostic'-Judaistic amalgam. "There is no reason, therefore, to suppose that the congregations addressed in the Johannine epistles belong to anything but the Hellenistic Jewish community for which we argued the Gospel was written."<sup>(174)</sup> Thus, Robinson concluded that the emphases in 1 John are "Necessary correctives to deductions drawn from the teaching of the Fourth Gospel by a gnosticising movement within Greek-speaking diaspora Judaism."<sup>(175)</sup> In some ways this is very close to Houlden's understanding but in this understanding it is the 'heretics' who have drawn the wrong deductions and the consistency of Johannine theology is in the mainstream.

The major drift of the argument is not altered as it is presented in "Redating the New Testament". Here, he emphasised the Jewish character; "Their essential Jewishness has been reinforced by the close parallels with the language of Qumran."<sup>(176)</sup> They are now dated in the early sixties, which involved him in withdrawing from his earlier understanding that the author was attacking Cerinthus. He still accepted the priority of the Gospel, although the Gospel without the Prologue for which the opening verses of 1 John are a trial sketch.

Robinson was, in the later work, impressed by the importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls for New Testament study. He drew attention, however, to what he considered to be an important distinction; "The Gospel (the Fourth) shows the marks of being both (my italics) Palestinian and Greek - in contrast with the Qumran literature which is Palestinian

and Hebrew. I am not convinced that this simple difference has been given sufficient weight."<sup>(177)</sup> He suggested that the Johannine tradition took its distinctive shape in contact with Greek-speaking Jews in Jerusalem. If this is correct, it would go a long way towards explaining the fusion of Jewish and Greek thought to be found in the Johannine writings.

An easy index of the impact of Qumran upon Johannine studies is provided by J.H. Charlesworth's "John and Qumran".<sup>(178)</sup> There are, from our point of view, three important essays in this collection. M.E. Boismard maintained that "Of all the writings of the New Testament, the first Epistle of John, along with the Epistle to the Ephesians, presents perhaps the greatest number of theological contacts with the writings of Qumran."<sup>(179)</sup> This essay was decisive for both Houlden and Robinson, arguing as it did, that much of the teaching of 1 John comes from that concerning the two spirits in Qumran. J.L. Price, having noted that the initial extravagant enthusiasm had died down, argued that it is now possible to postulate a Palestinian provenance for much of the Johannine tradition, even though the Johannine writings show signs of a complicated editorial process.<sup>(180)</sup> G. Quispel, realising the problem of definition and description of "Jewish Christianity", sought to show that all the Johannine writings "Have some affinity with the Jewish Christian Gospel tradition and are firmly rooted in Palestinian soil."<sup>(181)</sup>

Two concluding points may be made:

Firstly; There are those who still deny any points of contact between Qumran and the Johannine writings. A good example is H.M. Teeple, who may well have been reacting against the initial enthusiasm.<sup>(182)</sup>

Secondly: this movement towards seeing 1 John and the rest of the Johannine writings from within something of a Jewish context antedated Qumran.

In 1947, T.W. Manson wrote, enquiring into the provenance of the Fourth

Gospel, "First I should put the growing conviction that the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle of John are fundamentally Hebraic rather than Hellenic in character." (183)

"The Johannine Epistles" - The Appreciation of Reviewers.

Generally speaking, Dodd's understanding of the Johannine Epistles was welcomed. V. Taylor commented "Written in the most readable manner, and with the learning and insight for which Professor Dodd is well known, the commentary is a fresh and vital presentation of the Johannine theology as it is found in the three epistles." (184) R.M. Grant was more ecstatic; "With the present work the Moffatt series draws near its close. At the same time it reaches a climax." (185) W. Manson, too, was impressed; "Readers of Professor Dodd's earlier volume on Romans...will find here the same distinguished qualities which commended that book - freshness of mind, lucidity of style, trenchancy in exposition, a wide and various knowledge of conditions in the Hellenistic world, and a fine perception of the relation of Apostolic Christianity to the religious and speculative ideas of the time." (186) At the end of a long and appreciative review, Howard wrote,

"Every reader of this learned and fascinating Commentary will continue to hope that its brilliant author will fulfil the expectations raised by a hint in the Preface and give us a commentary on the Fourth Gospel. There is no living scholar so eminently equipped to write the book which would at the same time be our best Commentary on the greatest of the Gospels and the most stimulating and satisfying exposition of the Johannine theology." (187)

Hardly was praise so lavish. Some reviewers noted points of disagreement, but all recognised a great commentary in which many Doddian emphases have come to the fore. I think Dodd might well have appreciated mainly the comment of Grant; "In fact, it is everything a modern commentary ought to be. Thoroughly historical, it is not limited to criticism alone; Dodd's

exegesis begins in history and ends in theology."<sup>(188)</sup> Provided we see no antithesis between these terms, they issue in the great task of interpretation as Dodd had defined it.<sup>(189)</sup>

### Conclusions.

Dodd's work, notably in the commentary, is of great value in its own right and as a contribution to his understanding of the Johannine literature. There can be no doubt that this phase reached its climax in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel". His work owes little to that of Brooke, other than his setting out the essential lines that any commentary on this literature must follow. It has been suggested that there are some less than satisfying elements in this work. In particular, he did not feel the need to respond to some damaging criticisms made by his fellow scholars, notably in the question of authorship. It seems too that he brought an image of the Evangelist to this study which made it difficult for him to take seriously the possibility that both major works bearing the name of John could have been from the same author. More damagingly, Dodd was not consistent in his working out the centripetal and homogeneous nature of primitive Christianity. Even before the Qumran discoveries, it is clear that he had overestimated the Hellenistic influence in the Epistle, and had been content to work with the notion that the Hellenistic could be radically distinguished from the Jewish. It was in this period that Dodd was stressing the necessity of Greek thought for the expression of the Gospel in its fullness. Dodd's work at some time should have issued in the quest for the Johannine community; it never did, and to that extent his understanding of the context of Johannine theology remains suspect. Like "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" this significant commentary has not had the impact that might have been expected. It has already been shown that the next major commentary in English refers to Dodd on just four occasions.

That this commentary must be understood in its Doddian context may easily be illustrated from his understanding of 5.6, where he accepted

the reading of 'Aleph and A', "Who came by water, blood and spirit." Howard summarised Dodd's understanding neatly; this refers "To the descent of the Spirit on Jesus, to the baptism and to the crucifixion as authenticated facts of history bearing witness to the incarnate life of the Son of God. So 'the apostolic faith is authenticated against a false teaching by a three-fold testimony: the living voice of prophecy and the two evangelical sacraments, and the three of them are in accord'." (190) Dodd was well aware that the reading adopted by Moffatt in his translation was not usually accepted but he went on to note that "The true text remains uncertain, but the reading adopted above, as well as being strongly attested, gives a good sequence of thought." (191) From his comments there is little doubt that Dodd thought this the original text. Within these comments we find the familiar Doddian emphasis on the value and nature of the sacraments. (192)

Where the author's theological insights were seen by Dodd to coincide with his own, then Dodd's interpretation is satisfying. We have, however, suggested that there are occasions when he has been unable to do justice to theological insights with which he was uneasy. Like his next major work on the Johannine literature, this commentary fulfils the expectations aroused by his Cambridge Inaugural lecture. It remains a tragedy that Dodd did not write his commentary on the Fourth Gospel for it would have been interesting to see whether he could have subjected his understanding to the examination demanded by the new evidence that was emerging or whether it would have been in the Doddian tradition alone.



References - Chapter IV.

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29. Ibid.
30. Ibid. p.1036.
31. Ibid.
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33. Ibid. p.v.
34. Ibid. p.xvii.
35. cf Ibid. pp.xviii-xxi.
36. Ibid. p.xxiii.
37. Ibid. p.xxvii.
38. Ibid. p.xxixf.
39. Ibid. p.xxxii.
40. cf Ibid. p.xxxiv.
41. Ibid. p.xli.
42. Ibid.
43. cf Ibid. p.xiii, "In this connection it is natural to take into account the evidence of the Fourth Gospel. It is hardly necessary to restate at length the obvious facts that the needs of the Jewish controversy are a dominant factor in the Evangelist's choice of subject-matter and presentation. His hostility to his own nation, or rather to those who in his opinion falsely represented it and had proved unfaithful to its vocation, is one of the most prominent characteristics of his work. In the Epistle it is far less prominent, but it is difficult to discover any real difference in the situations which the Gospel and the Epistle presuppose in this respect". Like Dodd, Brooke, then, thought that the essential setting of the two works were identical. Brooke, of course, anticipated the situation proposed for the Fourth Gospel by J.L. Martyn.
44. Ibid. p.xliii.
45. Ibid. xliv.
46. Houlden, Commentary, p.3.
47. Ibid. p.6.
48. Ibid. p.9.

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50. Houlden, Commentary, p.10.
51. Ibid. p.12.
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53. Ibid. p.14.
54. Ibid. p.18.
55. Ibid.
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57. Ibid.
58. cf Ibid. p.21f.
59. Ibid. p.22.
60. Ibid. p.25, quoting B. Lindars, Behind the Fourth Gospel, S.P.C.K., 197
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid. p.29.
63. Ibid. p.30.
64. Ibid. p.32.
65. Ibid. p.35.
66. cf Ibid. "What the heretics cannot accept is that the Messiah, whose visitation has had such spectacular results (such as the gifts of eternal life and sinlessness for his followers), is at all points identical with the human Jesus who had suffered death".
67. Ibid. p.36.
68. Ibid. p.32.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid.
71. cf Dodd, Commentary, p.xviii.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid. p.xix.
74. Ibid. p.xxv.

75. cf Ibid. p.xvii. "The Fourth Gospel can best be understood as a brilliant attempt to undercut the whole process (i.e. avoiding the difficulties seen in Colossians and the Pastorals) by a genuine and thoroughgoing reinterpretation, in which alien categories are completely mastered and transformed by the Gospel, and constrained to express the central truth of Christianity in universal terms. It was along the lines laid down in the Fourth Gospel that the problem was in the end successfully solved".
76. Ibid. p.xxi.
77. Ibid. p.xxii.
78. Ibid. p.xxvii.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid.
81. Ibid. p.xxviii.
82. Ibid. p.xxix.
83. Dodd, According to the Scriptures, p.46.
84. Dodd, Commentary, p.xxix.
85. Ibid. p.xxxf.
86. Ibid. p.xxx.
87. cf Ibid. p.xxxiii.
88. Ibid. p.xxxi.
89. Ibid.
90. F.W. Dillistone, C.H. Dodd Interpreter of the New Testament, Hodder and Stoughton, 1977, p.173.
91. This neat distinction of Kerygma and Didache has not been universally accepted.
92. Dodd, Commentary, p.xxxv.
93. Ibid. p.xlii. On the same page he continued, "It is clear that the theological climate prevailing at the time and place of writing differs appreciably from that of most of the New Testament. The author is free to reinterpret and apply fundamental articles of faith in relation to a new situation: a task to which Christian teachers are called at every period".
94. cf Ibid. p.xxxviii-xliii.
95. cf Ibid. p.liif.
96. Ibid. p.liii.
97. Ibid. p.lvi.
98. Dodd, 1 J.F.G. p.129.

99. cf Ibid. p.130f where he acknowledged "I will venture to appeal to the impression - the aesthetic or emotional impression if you will - made upon the reader". cf W.F. Howard, The Common authorship of the Johannine Gospel and Epistles, J.T.S., 47, 1947, pp.12-25; on p.283 he noted "The grammatical instinct of Moulton." The substance of the paper was given to the Society for Historical Theology at Oxford, November, 1939; all citations from the reprint in C.K. Barrett's revision of Howard's The Fourth Gospel in recent criticism and interpretation,
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103. cf Ibid. p.131f.
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106. Ibid. p.150.
107. Ibid. p.152.
108. Dodd, 1 J.F.G. p.133.
109. Howard, Common Authorship, p.286.
110. cf Wilson, op cit p.153.
111. Howard, Common Authorship, p.287.
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122. Ibid. p.273.
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127. Ibid. p.139f.
128. Ibid. p.140.
129. Howard, Common Authorship, p.288.
130. Ibid.
131. Ibid. p.288f.
132. cf Ibid. p.288-91.
133. cf Manson, op cit p.116, footnote 2.
134. Wilson, op cit p.155; list of words cited in footnote 2.
135. Ibid. p.155f.
136. Ibid. p.156.
137. Howard, Common Authorship, p.293.
138. cf Dodd, 1 J.F.G. p.142, "Those chapters of the Gospel which have on the whole most affinity with the Epistle, 13-17, offer fewer quotations and fewer indirect echoes of the Old Testament than elsewhere".
139. cf Ibid. p.142, "It is generally recognized that of all the New Testament writings the Fourth Gospel is the one in which the eschatology inherited from Judaism is most radically transformed".
140. Ibid.
141. Howard, Common Authorship, p.294.
142. Dodd, 1 J.F.G. p.143.
143. Howard, Common Authorship, p.294.
144. Dodd's description 1 J.F.G. p.144.
145. Howard, Common Authorship, p.293.
146. Dodd, 1 J.F.G. p.144ff.
147. Howard, Common Authorship, p.295.
148. Dodd, 1 J.F.G., p.146.

149. Ibid.
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155. Ibid.
156. Ibid. p.149.
157. Ibid.
158. Brooke, Commentary, ad loc.
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160. Howard, Common Authorship, p.296.
161. cf Brooke, Commentary and Houlden, Commentary, ad loc.
162. Dodd, Commentary, p.71.
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165. Dodd, 1 J.F.G., p.152.
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## Chapter V.

### "The Authority of History".

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"The Authority of History".

Part four of "The authority of the Bible" is entitled "The authority of history"; in this title is disclosed a major Doddian emphasis. For Dodd, Christianity is a historical religion. Thus, he argued that "The Christian claim is that in this particular historical process, culminating in the unique events out of which Christianity arose, the real meaning of all history may be studied. That claim implies, first, that history has a meaning, and secondly that this meaning is disclosed more clearly in some events and series of events than in others."<sup>(1)</sup> He suggested that these assumptions were not unreasonable;

"On a theistic view of the world, the meaning of history is what God means by it. Conversely, what God means is disclosed by the facts of history as they are experienced by men open to their impact and qualified to understand them. It is claimed that in the Bible we have a record of facts thus understood and interpreted, with an interpretation imposed by the facts themselves upon responsive minds. The whole process, fact and interpretation, forms a part of the objective order of history within which we stand and to which we are subject. The claim that the meaning disclosed in it is ultimately regulative of all history, is an act of faith. It can be no other, while history remains incomplete."<sup>(2)</sup>

Dodd made this act of faith and his primary instincts were those of the historian. Dillistone has seen the significance of this for Dodd's theology; "The implications of such a claim were far-reaching. No pains must be spared to investigate biblical history as carefully as possible. But this did not mean a mere hunting for dates and sequences of events. It meant rather a constant exposure to events as interpreted by men who experienced them."<sup>(3)</sup>

Within the context of our study four important areas emerge.

Initially, we will set forth and discuss Dodd's own position.

Secondly, this position has implications for his understanding of the nature and importance of the sacrament of the Eucharist and Christian preaching. It is through these that we are now exposed to the most significant event of all history.

Thirdly, whilst it is fashionable to describe Dodd's theology as 'Platonic', it appears that 'Incarnational' is a better description. In some important ways this is the reversal of Platonism. Finally, much of Dodd's thought was in conscious dialogue with that of Hoskyns and we will discuss their respective understandings of Christianity as a historical religion.

#### Dodd's understanding of Christianity as historical religion.

Dodd's understanding of the nature of revelation demands that historically reliable information may be found in the Bible; "This brings us to the most important sense in which Christianity is an historical religion. It depends upon a valuation of historical events as the medium of God's self-revelation in action."<sup>(4)</sup> A definition of history is required. At the end of a short discussion Dodd concluded,

"If we now accept the definition of history as consisting of events which are of the nature of occurrence plus meaning, we may describe the story of the Gospels as a narrative of events whose meaning is eschatological, that is to say, events in which is to be discerned the mighty act of the transcendent God which brings history to its fulfilment. There is, then, an historical and suprahistorical aspect of the Gospel story."<sup>(5)</sup>

This had been an important element in Dodd's thought for some time. In 1923 he applied it to the death of Christ; "In any case we must set it down as a very suggestive element in Paul's thought, that he regards the whole of the individual life of Jesus as a working out of one suprahistorical act of self-sacrifice, in which we may see the gathering up of the whole impulse of self-sacrifice to be found in the history of mankind."<sup>(6)</sup> As in his doctrine of creation in which the natural and

the supernatural were distinct yet related, so in his understanding of history the historical and the suprahistorical were related yet distinct.

The definitive Doddian position was elaborated in four studies which are reasonably contemporary with his review of Hoskyns' commentary; "The Authority of the Bible", 1928 but noting too the preface to the second edition of 1938, where much that is implicit in the first edition becomes explicit; "The Apostolic preaching and its development", 1936, "History and the Gospel", 1938 and his article on "Revelation" in Expository Times, 1939. Granting that the Gospels are religious books, Dodd went on to assert,

"But they are Christian documents, and it belongs to the specific character of Christianity that it is an historical religion. Some religions can be indifferent to historical fact, and move entirely on the plane of timeless truth. Christianity cannot. It rests upon the affirmation that a series of events happened, in which God revealed Himself in action, for the salvation of men. The Gospels profess to tell us what happened. They do not, it is true, set out to gratify a purely historical curiosity about past events, but they do set out to nurture faith upon the testimony to such events. It remains, therefore, a question of acute interest to the Christian Theologian whether their testimony is in fact true. No insistence upon the religious character of the Gospels, or to the transcendent nature of the revelation which they contain, can make that question irrelevant."<sup>(7)</sup>

That this is an important Doddian stance may be seen from its being spelled out in the preface to the second edition of "The Authority of the Bible". In this preface the only question that is discussed, is the question of the meaning of history. Dodd observed that this question "Has moved well into the foreground of thought during the decade since this book first appeared."<sup>(8)</sup> In what appears to be a dialogue with the 'Hegelianism' of the period, which is epitomised in Fichte's well-known

dictum "The metaphysical only, and not the historical, can give us blessedness", the classical Doddian stance is affirmed;

"Christianity is thoroughly committed to the view that God reveals himself in and through history. It is no doubt paradoxical to affirm that our knowledge of the eternal and necessary truths depends upon contingent views of history. Christianity accepts that paradox..... The Biblical story, therefore, though it plays the part which in some other religions is played by the sacred myths in which their belief is symbolically expressed, cannot be expressed as a myth, whose truth to fact is irrelevant. The Gospel is not, in this sense, 'truth embodied in a tale'. That which happened, as well as what it means, is apart of the revelation."<sup>(9)</sup>

In affirming this position Dodd was being utterly consistent, "Mysticism in its more extreme forms dismisses the historical order as irrelevant. Christianity cannot do so, while it uses as the symbol of its faith a creed which cites events 'under Pontius Pilate', and includes among the objects of belief an historical society, the Catholic Church."<sup>(10)</sup> He knew also that there were powerful voices arguing against this view; "In some forms of Christian belief, the doctrine of the fall of man is held to imply that human nature has become so entirely corrupt that history as such, historian's history, as we might call it, does not in any degree disclose the truth of God, since it is the record of a fallen race."<sup>(11)</sup> For Dodd this is an impossible position since "It does violence to the continuity within which all historical events seem to lie, including those recited in the creed,"<sup>(12)</sup> denies any genuine insight to Greek religion, Greek philosophy and Semitic religion as well as ignoring the fact that our existence is historically conditioned. Moreover, whilst we may call the history related in the Bible sacred history, the same events also belong to secular history. The difference between these two histories is that "The sacred history, unlike secular history,

is a finished series, for the coming of Christ is represented as 'fulfilment' of the divine purposes."<sup>(13)</sup> This, too, is a major Doddian emphasis;

"The Gospel facts are presented to us as the 'Fulfilment' of a long historical process, beginning with the call of Abraham, and continuing down to the time of Christ.....The divine initiative appears at every stage. For the Word of God through Moses and the prophets descends upon the process of events and gives them their place in the organic structure of the Heilsgeschichte, that is, history as the process of divine self-revelation."<sup>(14)</sup>

Moreover, in a stance that echoes his realised eschatology, Dodd continued "We enter rather into the full meaning of history at its centre, where the Word was made flesh; where God visited and redeemed His People."<sup>(15)</sup> No higher view of history is possible and Dodd elaborated on the dangers of neglecting the historical.

"If we lose hold upon the historical actuality, the Gospels are betrayed into the hands of the Gnostics and we stand upon the verge of a new Docetism. Moreover, the denial of the importance of historical facts would carry with it a denial of what is the essence of the Gospel, namely, that the historical order - that order within which we must live and work - has received a specific character from the entrance into it of the Eternal Word of God."<sup>(16)</sup>

For Dodd this is the definitive characteristic of Christianity; as he put it ten years before,

"But it is characteristic of Christianity to find its Christ in history as well as above history. Those who neglect the gospels as mythical and obsolete and point us to the eternal 'Christ within' as the only object of faith, no less than those who will allow us nothing but a 'Jesus of history' are proposing an unreal simplification contrary to the genius of our religion, and missing that in it which makes it a unique interpretation of life - the unity

of the eternal with the historical."<sup>(17)</sup>

Dodd accepted, and indeed welcomed, the historical method as a corollary of this position;

"In studying the Bible, then, we are dealing with actual history, disclosing a meaning which reaches beyond history, and not with a myth whose factual content is negligible. But if so, then the record must be studied by rational and critical methods applicable to historical records as such. It is in this way that I have tried to approach the documents in this book, upon the assumption that they will yield their meaning for religion to a strictly historical treatment, as they should, if the relation between history and the Word of God is such as Christianity affirms it to be."<sup>(18)</sup>

For Dodd this included the quest for the historical Jesus;

"And so we turn back to the unfinished 'quest of the historical Jesus' for we cannot escape it, in spite of the flourish against 'Historismus' with which our period opened. As the great tradition reveals itself afresh in its wholeness and essential unity, the yawning gap which earlier criticism left between the Jesus of History and the emergent church disappears and we begin to see that to make a separation between the historical and theological understanding of the Gospels is to put asunder what God hath joined."<sup>(19)</sup>

For Dodd there is a theological meaning to all history, in the sense that to all history there is the supra-historical aspect. Although this point will be discussed in more detail later, it seems significant that Dodd wrote of a supra-historical aspect that makes sense of history, while Hoskyns wrote of the non-historical aspect making sense of history. It will be suggested that more than a difference of terminology is involved. Dodd thought of only one thing higher than history, namely, the supra-historical, with which history is organically related. As we have already noted, Dodd had been working with this concept since 1920. The nature of

the supra-historical was discussed at some length in the appendix, "Eschatology and History" which was included in "The Apostolic Preaching and its developments". The supra-historical

"is in the first place supernatural. Not, indeed, that the supernatural factor is absent from any part of history, for in the prophetic view all history is the field of divine action. But the eschaton is manifestly supernatural....In all these respects the Day of the Lord is the 'fulfilment' of history. While it belongs, in the last resort, to the realms of the 'wholly other', it is nevertheless not something alien and unrelated to the recorded course of events. For history depends for its meaning and reality upon that which is other than history. The real, inward and eternal meaning striving for expression in the course of history, is completely expressed in the eschaton, which is therefore organically related to history." (20)

Thus history must be 'occurrence plus meaning' and history so understood is the field of revelation, and so Dodd argued,

"It is important to observe that these two elements, occurrence and meaning, are both essential to history as it is studied by the historian....The events recorded in the Bible are rich in meaning. This meaning is declared to be nothing less than the 'Word' of the eternal God, itself transcending history as well as immanent in it. The record does not for this reason cease to be historical, for the events bore this meaning as they entered into experience, and became history. But the meaning which they bear leads to an interpretation of history according to which events in their actuality depend upon a supra-historical factor, the Word of God." (21)

Dodd's position was worked out at some length in an article entitled "Revelation". Arguing that "In any act of knowing there are two factors: the given, which is beyond our control, and the activity of the mind



working upon it."<sup>(22)</sup> Dodd went on to suggest that "It is in worshipping God that we apprehend His revelation, and the apprehension is not a purely intellectual act of knowing, but a moral response to God's demand, made possible for us by His gift."<sup>(23)</sup> Whilst Dodd's understanding of preaching and the eucharist will be discussed later, it is necessary to observe that "Christian worship has the distinctive character that it arises out of what God has done for us in the concrete objective realm of historical fact."<sup>(24)</sup> In our worship these historical events are made present to us so that "We lift our hearts into the presence of God, but do not thereby move out of the historical context to which our daily lives belong."<sup>(25)</sup> This is possible because "This intervention of the Word of God is both interpretive and constitutive of the historical process."<sup>(26)</sup> Such a position involves an act of faith. Dodd knew of those who opposed such faith but he reaffirmed his position; "Events of history, indeed, so far as they issue from human purposes and actions, could not of themselves reveal God. For all human purposes and actions are corrupted by sin. Yet they are overruled by God."<sup>(27)</sup> As the article concludes, the essential Doddian position is affirmed;

"The perspective of revelation is set forth in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel; here, while the Word in the Beginning with God is logically prior, the *πρωτερον προς ἡμας* is the Word made flesh, where alone for men clear knowledge is given.....We read the revelation of God in history and nature by the light of His self-revelation in Christ."<sup>(28)</sup>

#### Dodd's quest of the historical Jesus.

The classical Doddian position demands a quest of the historical Jesus. What he wrote specifically of the Fourth Gospel is true of all Christian theology; "The announcement that the revelation of the Godhead is to be sought in the words and deeds, the life and death of a Person who taught in Palestine and was crucified under Pontius Pilate."<sup>(29)</sup> This quest will be illustrated from two works that are late in Dodd's career,

"The Portrait of Jesus in John and the Synoptics", 1967, and "The Founder of Christianity", 1971. No use will be made of "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" because in that work Dodd deliberately confined himself to the recovery and description of Johannine strain of the tradition, ignoring questions of historical probability. In short, he restricted himself there to the 'objective' task of recovery and description of the Johannine tradition avoiding the risks of 'subjectivity' which all questions of historical probability involve.<sup>(30)</sup>

"The Portrait of Jesus in John and the Synoptics" was a contribution to a collection of essays presented to John Knox. Dodd referred appreciatively to a passage in Knox's book "The Church and the reality of Christ". He was impressed by Knox's point that the Church,

" 'Has always known more of Jesus than the Gospels tell us', and he instances 'the relation in which he (Jesus) stood to his disciples and friends and they to him.' In this connexion he observes 'One reason why the Church has always cherished the Fourth Gospel, and has been unable to believe that it does not contain historical truths about Jesus, is that one can read there, and only there, such words as 'having loved his own.....he loved them to the end.' That is finely observed. The implications would seem to be that the Church is right in its belief that the Fourth Gospel contains 'historical truth' in some sense."<sup>(31)</sup>

Dodd knew that 'historical truth' was a difficult concept. He affirmed that he was using it in the sense that the average 'British juryman' would understand it. Thus the question is posed; "Have we reason to believe that Jesus was, as a matter of fact, attached to his disciples, and they to him, somewhat in the way described in the Fourth Gospel?"<sup>(32)</sup> Any evidence "Must come, Dr. Knox would rightly say, from the memory of the Church."<sup>(33)</sup>

From this starting point Dodd pondered the "Question of the historical value of the Johannine presentation as a contribution to the portrait

of Jesus in his actual human condition."<sup>(34)</sup> The alternative possibilities were neatly put; granted that the Fourth Gospel is an interpretation, rather than a record,

"....it is pertinent to ask, an interpretation of what? Is it an interpretation of Christian experience (or of Existenz, as they say in Germany)', or is it an interpretation of a real historical character? In other words, is the Johannine picture of Jesus essentially a theological construction based on the experience of the Church long after his death, and given dramatic reality by the powerful imagination of the author (and he had a powerful imagination), or does it give, in terms of a sophisticated theology, a rendering of a credible historical figure?"<sup>(35)</sup>

Unless the latter possibility is true there cannot be, on strict Doddian terms, any possibility of revelation.

The way forward lay in a comparison of the portraits offered; "We are comparing two paintings by different artists who work in different media, within different conventions, each with his own individual technique, and we are asking whether characteristic traits which suggest a single personality come through in both."<sup>(36)</sup> This procedure is continuous with the hope expressed at the end of "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" where Dodd suggested that, once we have recovered the Johannine strain of the tradition, we may take a stereoscopic view of the facts. If the traits of a single personality come through, "Then we learn something not only about the artists but about the sitter - more than we can learn from a single portrait."<sup>(37)</sup>

Dodd turned again to chapter five of the Fourth Gospel, a locus classicus of Johannine theology. Again he went to the parable of the 'Apprenticed Son' which he had discovered some years previously. In the dialogue in this chapter Jesus is replying to the charge that he had made himself equal with God by suggesting that his works and God's are identical or parallel. As Dodd understands the dialogue, Jesus,

"Admits that he is indeed doing the works of God, which are ζωοποιεῖν and κρινεῖν but he is not doing so in independence of God the Father, or even (as it were) in rivalry with him - not a δευτερος θεος. On the contrary, in his whole activity he is completely dependent on the Father and completely subordinate to him, deriving from him both the power to give life and the authority to judge. But, this granted, yes, Jesus is the judge and the giver of life and these are the functions of deity." (38)

This theological argument starts from a simple parable which is allegorised in verses 20b-29. Then "The discourse sets forth the Johannine form of the doctrine of Christ as the judge of men." (39) This doctrine is not unknown from the rest of the New Testament but John has given it a particular emphasis.

When Dodd turned to the Synoptic Gospels, he found that only in Matthew 13.41-3 and 25.31 is it explicitly stated that Jesus is the judge of all men and concluded "That this idea is less prominent than it is in the Fourth Gospel." (40) This is by no means all;

"Whereas outside this gospel, wherever the idea of Christ as judge appears, it is always the last judgement that is in view, in John the judgement of Christ takes place within the historical ministry, with its consummation in his death on the cross.... Thus, while the common creed of the Church says 'He will come in glory to judge', John makes Christ say, 'For judgement I came into this world' (9.39)" (41)

Dodd canvassed an explanation in terms of the Fourth Evangelist's re-interpretation of the current eschatology of the Church yet he went on to argue that such an explanation was inadequate.

Dodd argued that the theological position in chapter five accords with the Johannine presentation of the ministry of Jesus; "The judgement of the world by Christ, therefore, in the Johannine sense, has the character of human reaction to his presence in the world, and primarily his

presence as incarnate, that is as an historical person."<sup>(42)</sup> Moreover, this is the key to the structure of the gospel;

"The story he (John) tells is the story of the encounter between Jesus and representative groups, as a result of which some are initiated into eternal life, while others are shown up as belonging to  $\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \kappa\alpha\tau\omega$  - the world of darkness and death. It is a process of sifting, and the word  $\kappa\rho\iota\nu\epsilon\iota\nu$  in this gospel is often haunted by the shadow of its primitive meaning. 'To separate', 'discriminate'. Thus the conception of the Ministry as judgement of men is a 'built-in' feature of the portrait of Jesus as it appears in the Fourth Gospel."<sup>(43)</sup>

Is such a feature simply a Johannine construct?

Dodd compared this picture with that found in the Synoptics. In an examination of six passages - Mark 10.18-27, Luke 9.47-62, 10.9-12, Matthew 12.29-42=Luke 11.29-32, Matthew 8.5-13 and Matthew 11.21-2=Luke 10.12-24 - he found the Johannine portrait corroborated;

"The Synoptic Gospels....in poetry, parable and vivid dialogue yield a picture of Jesus as one whose impact on the situation brought men to judgement. Its finality is emphasised through the symbolism of doomsday, but in fact we see the judgement taking place before our eyes. John's method of presentation in abstract general propositions, is widely different, but the picture lying behind it is essentially the same."<sup>(44)</sup>

The Johannine discourse in chapter five also deals with the theme of Christ's authority to judge 5.22,27. There is only one Synoptic passage - Mark 2.10 and parallels - that might be considered a parallel. Dodd was, of course, aware of the problems surrounding the Marcan passage and he knew of those who rejected its authenticity and suggested "It may be that Jesus never expressly put forward a claim to such authority. He may have exercised it without troubling to formulate a claim."<sup>(45)</sup> At best he concluded

"There is only one passage in the Fourth Gospel and one in the synoptics where Jesus expressly claims to possess authority and specifically to judge 'on earth', that is in his historic ministry."<sup>(46)</sup> Yet "the whole presentation, in the synoptics particularly, is governed by the concept of his authority."<sup>(47)</sup> Dodd argued that Jesus was aware of his authority and its origin. Jesus' was impressed by the Centurion who knowingly holds his authority from Tiberius, "So Jesus exercises an authority which is that of almighty God; and he can do so because (like the centurion) he is completely subject to that authority."<sup>(48)</sup> John expresses this truth through the parable of the 'Apprenticed Son'. An examination of this allegorised parable yields three additional points about the way in which John conceives of the divine authority as exercised by Jesus; 1) it is God-given, 2) "It arises from a perfect confidence between Father and Son,"<sup>(49)</sup> 3) it is grounded in obedience to the will of God "Amounting to identity of will."<sup>(50)</sup>

Thus Dodd argued convincingly that "In this passage (chapter 5), then, which lays down comprehensively the main lines of Johannine Christology, we have before us, in theological guise, a picture of the personality and work of Jesus which corresponds, in point after point, with the picture offered by the synoptics in a very different idiom."<sup>(51)</sup> Dodd was convinced that "the character of the sitter comes through unmistakably in both portraits."<sup>(52)</sup> More significantly in terms of Dodd's understanding of revelation, he maintained that "The discourse is, then, not a purely doctrinal construction, based solely upon the evangelist's peculiar theology; the parallels show that it was constructed with reference to a conception of what Jesus was like which is attested also in the synoptic gospels."<sup>(53)</sup> Assuming the conclusions reached in "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel", Dodd argued that "John's rendering of the portrait of Jesus will be neither his own invention nor the re-colouring of another artist's sketch. He will have had, through memories or traditions, available to him, access to the sitter, and the similarities we

have noted will go far to assure us that behind the two renderings of the portrait there stands a real historical person."<sup>(54)</sup>

It would have been a better article had it concluded once this point had been made. Dodd knew that too many conclusions could not be drawn from a single comparison, but one gets the impression that Dodd thought that if such a comparison of other passages were made similar results would be obtained. He went on to suggest that "We should be on the look-out not only for features in which the two renderings of the portrait appear to corroborate one other but also for features in which they may be complementary."<sup>(55)</sup> It was a common-place among critics that the Johannine and Synoptic portraits were remarkably different. A.J.B. Higgins may be taken as an example, yet he also confirmed that there were similarities. He maintained that "There is little doubt that if the only Gospel in our possession were that of John, the portrait of Jesus presented to our minds would be very different from what it is. To a considerable extent we unconsciously read John against the background of the other Gospels, and this is especially true in regard to the figure of Jesus."<sup>(56)</sup> It is true that Dodd does this. At this stage in his career he did apparently consider the Synoptic portrait the more normative, for that is the portrait against which the Johannine one is compared, and not in the first instance vice versa. Quite apart from the events of the life of Jesus for which John provides no information, Higgins argued that from the Fourth Gospel "We should be totally unaware of his (Jesus') association with tax gatherers and sinners and of his healings of lepers and demoniacs."<sup>(57)</sup> Dodd was not totally convinced and it was almost as though the last part of "The portrait of Jesus in John and the Synoptics" was an attempted answer. Dodd knew that one of the outstanding features of the Synoptic portrait of Jesus was his association with disreputable characters and the criticism to which this exposed him. He suggested that John was not entirely unaware of this feature. We see a hint of this in 4.27-37 where Jesus is in conversation with a woman of loose morals and one such from

Samaria, but is this enough to warrant the conclusion "John lays no stress on this aspect of the encounter but there is enough to show that he was aware of Jesus as the kind of person who would brave the censure of public opinion to befriend 'the sick' who 'need a physician'."?(58) Dodd is here going beyond the evidence into that subjective realm that he so feared as the inevitable counterpart of constructing a picture of Jesus. It is as though Dodd was not aware sometimes of how hard he had to work to recover the portrait of Jesus from the Fourth Gospel. Moreover, it also suggests that the Synoptic portrait is accepted as the normative one.

An identical judgement may be fairly passed on Dodd's second example. For this he returned to the point with which he began the study, John's emphasis on the friendship between Jesus and his disciples. Of this there is but the slightest hint in the Synoptics. Of these hints, Luke 22.28, Matthew 26.40 and Mark 14.17-21 and 27-31; Dodd wrote "Though the Synoptics do not say so, the implicit background of it all is the mutual love of Jesus and his disciples. John makes it explicit."(59) Even allowing for John's accomplishments as a writer, notably in the dramatic presentation of the Farewell Discourses, Dodd suggested "Here, then, it seems that the Fourth Gospel complements the comparatively meagre data of the Synoptics. Here, as elsewhere, the same figure stands behind both, and the portrait is more living because, being drawn from more than one angle, it can be viewed in depth."(60)

It is difficult to assess this article both in its own terms as well as in terms of Dodd's understanding of the historical nature of revelation. In the first part, Dodd was successful in suggesting that behind the profound theological presentation of the Fourth Gospel there was an historical figure that recalled the figure of the Synoptic presentation. In this regard the verdict of Nicol is pertinent, and shows how much Dodd's work had influenced certain scholars. He asserted,

"Finally, a possible misunderstanding should be emphatically removed, namely, that the classification of a passage as Johannine implies



that it is unhistorical. It has often been thought that all the typical Johannine discourses are completely unhistorical, but this is incorrect. It is often surprising to see how fully 'Johannine' discourses seem to be based on tradition. Dodd investigated the entire Gospel in this respect and found that there is much more 'historical tradition' in it than is usually thought."<sup>(61)</sup>

Moreover Dodd found in the Fourth Gospel that essential union of the historical and theological, in this respect, as in others, the Fourth Gospel is the epitome of a true Christian understanding.

It might well be suggested that Dodd should have heeded Beare's warning as far as the second part is concerned; "The 'new look' on the Fourth Gospel has already, in my opinion, set a number of my colleagues dancing down a false path; and I would beg that due weight should still be given to the patently unhistorical aspects of the Johannine picture of Jesus, as well as to the presence within the compilation of elements of good primitive tradition."<sup>(62)</sup> What Beare said of British scholarship (although he exempted Dodd from the charge) might well apply to Dodd: "British scholarship has an unquenchable longing for brute historical and biographical fact, and there is the perpetual danger that the wish may give birth to the persuasion that the facts are more readily ascertainable than is actually the case."<sup>(63)</sup> It may well be that Dodd's understanding that revelation demands historical fact precedes his discovery that any given part of the Johannine presentation is historically reliable. Moreover, it is dangerous to proceed by the complementary approach that Dodd has suggested in this article for, while it reflects the assertion of his Cambridge inaugural that "The unity of the New Testament is original,"<sup>(64)</sup> it cannot do justice to the diversity of the New Testament. Again, while it is true to argue that Dodd has generally been consistent in his understanding of the necessity of historical facts for revelation, I doubt if the evidence that Dodd presented in this article would have convinced the average British jurymen (the test that he, as it were, set

himself) that "Jesus was, as a matter of fact, attached to his disciples, and they to him, somewhat in the way described in the Fourth Gospel."<sup>(65)</sup> The evidence presented from the Synoptics was not convincing, particularly so when the nature of the Farewell Discourses is considered.

Dodd's quest for the historical Jesus comes to its climax in "The Founder of Christianity." Of all Dodd's works this is the hardest to evaluate since it had its origins in a course of lectures delivered at the University College of Wales in 1954, was extensively revised and its final form is a 'popular' book. One of the strengths of Dodd's work has been the service he has rendered the church through such popular books, but this is the only one in which there seems to be something of an unhappy fusion of the academic and the popular. It assumes positions argued for elsewhere without always making this clear. The book was profusely welcomed by J.A.T. Robinson who called it a "Beautiful book" and affirmed that "It sometimes takes a professional scholar to appreciate just how good a popular book it is."<sup>(66)</sup> He continued "Anyone acquainted with the history of 'lives of Jesus' will know how mine-strewn an area this is. Yet the last three chapters of this book - 'The Story' - reconstruct the essentials with a sureness of judgement and an economy of line that I found breathtaking."<sup>(67)</sup> This last point was made in the context of comparing Dodd's work with others in which Jesus was, for example, portrayed as a Zealot freedom fighter; such works "Rest on assumption piled on dubious assumption."<sup>(68)</sup> He commended the book; "It is a relief to be able to recommend a study from a first-rate scholar...that is solidly grounded as well as being essentially readable."<sup>(69)</sup> Even allowing for the enthusiasm of a disciple and the nature of a foreword, there is no doubt that Robinson rates the book highly. This impression is confirmed by his use of it in "The human face of God", 1973, where it is the only Doddian work mentioned in the bibliography, even if others are cited in the footnotes. Yet, as Robinson noted, "The Founder of Christianity" was sweepingly denounced by H. Trevor-Roper.<sup>(70)</sup> This book, then, is a

popular one, yet not popular to the exclusion of academic interest. Many in the churches received it almost as the 'last will and testament' of a great scholar.

Once "The Founder of Christianity" is read in a Doddian context certain well known emphases come to the fore. The book evinces that 'unitive' approach to the gospels that is characteristic of Dodd, it continues the 'complementary' approach discussed above, its view is 'stereoscopic' to use the adjective from "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" and it is a contribution to the new quest looked forward to at the end of that volume. Thus Dodd asked and answered the question that he postponed at the end of that volume; "Whether this or that statement in the Fourth Gospel is likely to be historically correct, or more or less correct than another such statement in Mark or Luke."<sup>(71)</sup> It is noteworthy that on a significant number of occasions Dodd opted for the essential historicity of the Johannine account. This was implicit in much of his later work but it marked a significant break with his earlier writings on the subject. It is equally important to note that the essential Doddian position on the origin and purpose of the Fourth Gospel did not change.<sup>(72)</sup>

Early in "The Founder of Christianity" Dodd latched on to the importance of considering the gospels as complementary and giving a stereoscopic view. He asserted the fundamental historical reliability of the synoptic portrait but argued that it was not totally adequate.<sup>(73)</sup> Stressing that the Fourth Evangelist drew from the same general reservoir of tradition as the synoptics, Dodd argued "There are sayings of Jesus recorded only in the Fourth Gospel which seem to bring into relief aspects his teaching slenderly represented, if at all, in the others and these may be of importance to complete the picture."<sup>(74)</sup> In this Dodd was partly consistent with the position in "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" where he argued that "Passages which we should have no hesitation in recognizing as Johannine in doctrine, with no Synoptic parallel, are sometimes framed in

purely traditional forms. There seems no reason to doubt that in such cases John did find in tradition a direct starting point for the development of his distinctive theology."<sup>(75)</sup> He was anxious not to claim too much; "Such examples allow of no positive inference, but they may rightly serve as a warning against a hasty assumption that nothing in the Fourth Gospel which cannot be corroborated from the Synoptics has any claim to be regarded as part of the early tradition of the sayings of Jesus."<sup>(76)</sup> Thus Dodd suggested that it was probably the case that much of John's teaching can be traced to traditional sources "But I do not at present see any way of identifying further traditional material in the Fourth Gospel, where comparison with the other gospels fails us, without giving undue weight to subjective impressions."<sup>(77)</sup> In fact a number of reviewers of "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" criticised Dodd precisely because the only part of the Johannine tradition that he evaluated was that with a synoptic 'parallel'. In the later "The Founder of Christianity" Dodd moved to the position suggested by A.J.B. Higgins that the authenticity of the Johannine tradition at those points where it can be checked leads one to suppose that elsewhere too this tradition is reliable. He wrote of those sayings found only in the Fourth Gospel that "It would be unwise to neglect them, though to make use of them in a strictly historical investigation calls for some critical tact."<sup>(78)</sup> This sentence also underlines Dodd's intention in this book of pursuing an historical investigation and it is as such that the book must ultimately be judged.

To turn now to "The Founder of Christianity" as an example of the new quest of the historical Jesus. In the third chapter, "Personal traits", a very sensitive portrait of Jesus is drawn. Without discussing this chapter in any detail, some significant points emerge. Obvious Doddian stances are to the front in the conclusion that "The reported sayings of Jesus bear the stamp of an individual mind."<sup>(79)</sup> There is no possibility that "They are merely the product of skilful condensation by early Christian

teachers; they have the ring of originality."<sup>(80)</sup> Not only is this the conclusion that one would expect from Dodd. but in this chapter he argues well for it, yet within this chapter he also argues that apocalyptic was in no real sense characteristic of Jesus. This is much more debatable. It seems to spring, as much as anything else, from Dodd's own uneasiness with apocalyptic. If this conclusion is true, much modern understanding of the background of Jesus is very wide of the mark. An obvious example of a scholar who takes apocalyptic very seriously as part of the background of Jesus is J. Jeremias. Dodd's argument is not convincing; "This 'apocalyptic' imagery, then, though it may be said to fall in with the 'pictorial' manner of speaking to which he (Jesus) inclined, is not characteristic of Jesus. It was something that he shared with many others. What is characteristic and distinctive is the realism of the parables."<sup>(81)</sup> This is to overestimate the uniqueness of the parables and to underestimate the significance of apocalyptic generally and, more specifically, the apocalyptic imagery of some of the parables. From "The Authority of the Bible", 1928, Dodd had been impressed by the significance of the parables. In the same book he disclosed an uneasiness with apocalyptic, yet strangely in that book he warned a generation against letting go too easily and quickly of apocalyptic;

"It is part of this time-relativity that Jesus, like the prophets, could not but make use of the thought-forms of His age. Some of his teaching, for example, is cast in the mould of an eschatological outlook which is distinctly that of the first century and alien from our own thought. It is almost certain that this element has been exaggerated by His reporters, and it is highly probable that in various ways our records of His teaching are more deeply coloured by their milieu than the teaching itself was. ( my *italics* ). Yet it is not to be thought that even in a perfectly accurate report it would have appeared entirely free from such colouring."<sup>(82)</sup>

It is significant here that 'eschatological' is a synonym for 'Apocalyptic'

This is not a synonym that is natural. Dodd consistently considered the career of Jesus to be eschatological; this is a significant part of the classical Doddian stance already outlined. There is no doubt that Dodd was ill at ease with apocalyptic. Despite all his interest in the Johannine writings Dodd showed absolutely minimal interest in "The Revelation of John". Even here, in 1928, Dodd showed a maturity of judgement and openness to the nature of the Gospel records for he would not follow the earlier liberalism in denying that there was any apocalyptic in the teaching of Jesus.

Yet a comparison of Dodd with Jeremias is instructive for both scholars have studied the parables of Jesus in great depth and have found much of the characteristic teaching of Jesus there. Jeremias, with a greater knowledge of first century Judaism, including sectarian Judaism, has been much more able to place apocalyptic in its proper place as part of the background of Jesus. It seems that Dodd, the classicist, could not understand apocalyptic nor indeed its relevance to the understanding of the background of Jesus. Maybe Dodd was assisted in this course by his understanding of the Fourth Gospel as the most penetrating expression of the teaching of Jesus for in this gospel apocalyptic plays far less part than in the synoptics. More significantly it appears again that Dodd, once he moved beyond the primary task of recovering and describing a Johannine strand of the tradition, was very vulnerable to the subjectivity that he so feared once one moved on to the secondary task of making judgements of historical probability.<sup>(83)</sup>

Also in his latest book Dodd returns briefly to his early interest in psychology when discussing John 5.6-8; "There is another story about a man who had given way to a chronic disability, and for some years had nursed a grievance about it ('Someone else always gets in before me.') 'Do you want to recover?', Jesus asked, 'Then pick up your bed and walk'. compassionate, certainly, but bracing too."<sup>(84)</sup> The question of what actually happened is avoided. It is clear that Dodd seems to think in

terms of psychological illness here. The incident is cited as the second example which illustrates the contention that

“Many stories in the gospels illustrate his sensitive response to such need, whether the trouble was physical or moral. By his sympathy and compassion, but also by the strength which they felt in him, he inspired his patients with a new confidence - with 'faith', a term which in the gospels included both trust in the goodness of God and the courage and firmness which derive from it.”<sup>(85)</sup>

Much in this chapter recalls the complementary approach set out firmly in "The Portrait of Jesus in John and the Synoptics"; this has already been outlined. There is an unsolved problem in this complementary approach. Dodd freely admits that the Johannine sayings of Jesus are 'part and parcel' of a Johannine theological interpretation of Jesus, a development in which the Fourth Evangelist has followed an accepted Greek pattern; "He gives what may appear to be revelations about the inner life of Jesus, in words of Jesus himself, but they must often be read rather as John's interpretation, sometimes indeed expressed in theological language which would have been strange to the circles in which Jesus actually moved."<sup>(86)</sup> If this is so, how and to what extent may they be used in "an attempt to understand the mind of Jesus?"<sup>(87)</sup> Where they can be corroborated from the Synoptics this would seem legitimate; this is so of the points that Dodd makes in this chapter. He noted that "We cannot miss a pervading sense of dedication to a mission, which at times was a terrible burden."<sup>(88)</sup> The 'Driving Force' of this mission, to use Dodd's phrase, is to be found in the mutual knowledge of Father and Son, which, although it is developed theologically in the Fourth Gospel, may seem also in Matthew 11.27=Luke 10.22 where it is "A spontaneous statement".<sup>(89)</sup> Dodd goes far beyond this. His implicit position reflects a long-held view that the Fourth Gospel is the most penetrating and mature interpretation of the significance of Jesus.<sup>(90)</sup> Dodd believes that it belongs to the essential nature

of a Christian Gospel to interpret the remembered words and actions of Jesus responsibly. Since this is so, the Christian gospels may be used in a complementary fashion; any other course of action would appear to deny that the gospels were Christian gospels. In the case of the mature Fourth Gospel we are confronted by the fact that "John is making explicit what must be read between the lines in the other gospels."<sup>(91)</sup> While this was said specifically of Jesus's consciousness of his authority, it remains true of other important areas. A feature of "The Founder of Christianity" is Dodd's extensive use of the Fourth Gospel throughout. It has often become the standard by which the synoptics are judged though there are occasions when the Fourth Gospel is interpreted so that it conforms to the synoptic presentation of Jesus. Thus the belief that the Fourth Gospel is the authoritative interpretation of the significance of Jesus becomes the reason why the Johannine tradition is preferred in a reconstruction of the life and teaching of Jesus. This position seems to be assumed, not argued for. It springs essentially from Dodd's conception of the nature of the Fourth Gospel.

In the chapter "The Teacher" some familiar Doddian emphases appear. There is, for example, the emphasis on 'Realised Eschatology': "If we survey the whole body of the parables we cannot but observe that a large proportion of them have a common theme which we might describe as the arrival of 'Zero hour', the climax of a process, bringing a crisis in which decisive action is called for."<sup>(92)</sup> The majority of the texts cited are from the synoptics but John 4.35 is also interpreted in this way; "As harvest is the culminating point of the agricultural year, so this ("The hour with which Jesus and his hearers were faced at the time of speaking") is the climax of growth."<sup>(93)</sup> It is indeed possible that this might have originally been a parable of the kingdom and, as Lindars argues, "It is the same idea of the eschatological event being realized in the present as we found in John's 'the hour is coming, and now is' in verse 23,"<sup>(94)</sup> but the whole is embedded in a very difficult context which does not



demand that the 'Others' are the prophets. It would appear that here too there is the unsatisfactory situation inherent in a complementary use of the gospels. In this chapter Dodd made use of the complementary approach to judgement and authority established in "The Portrait of Jesus in John and the Synoptics." More interestingly it was in this chapter that Dodd noted a possible polemic against Qumran, when Jesus said "You have learned that they were told 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy', But what I tell you is this 'Love your enemies'" he may well have had in mind those who followed The Manual of Discipline. This is a rare occasion when Dodd acknowledged that the Dead Sea Scrolls and the community from which they came may have been a part of the context of the teaching of Jesus. It would be unwise to draw any conclusions from this single instance and Dodd's work remains unsatisfactory in that he failed to give this part of the context the serious treatment it merited at the time he was writing.

It was in the same chapter that Dodd correctly argued that Jesus's critics "Rightly divined that his teaching threatened the integrity of Judaism as a system in which religion and national solidarity were inseparable."<sup>(95)</sup> This was also seen to be part of the background for a small part of the Johannine tradition in "Behind a Johannine dialogue." It is harder to understand why Dodd failed to see any connection between the threat Jesus posed to Judaism so understood and the threat that the Johannine community itself posed to Judaism. Apart from the one reference in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" there is little sense of continuity between Jesus and the community in which the Gospel was produced in this regard. Whereas much later historical criticism has been involved in the quest for the historical Johannine community, Dodd apparently could only use the Fourth Gospel in a quest for the historical Jesus. Dodd was certainly correct in seeing that opposition to Judaism so understood was an important part of the context in which Jesus worked. This understanding is developed at some length in the chapter "The people

of God". Jesus moved within the prophetic interpretation of history; "In the prophetic tradition of history, Israel dies to rise again. In terms of the existing situation, the present Jewish establishment is doomed; the true people of God will emerge from its ruins."<sup>(96)</sup> Dodd argued that this idea was expressed in several metaphors; for example, in the words that Jesus is alleged to have spoken about the destruction of the temple. This statement was clearly an embarrassment to his followers. Dodd argues that we must not accept the Marcan/Matthean statement that it was a false statement, but accept the Johannine version that Jesus did so speak. He maintains that we must "Recognise that the saying is, like so many others, figurative; the Temple stands for a way of religion and a community embodying it. The manifest disintegration of the existing system is to be preliminary to the appearance of a new way of religion and a community embodying it."<sup>(97)</sup> This may well be so but there is no mistaking some Johannine redaction. It is more significant from the standpoint of our study to note here a change in the Doddian understanding. He did not repeat the explanation offered in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" where he argued that the imperative might well reflect a Hebrew form and have a conditional meaning; "If this temple is destroyed, I will raise it up in three days."<sup>(98)</sup> In this work, too, he observed that John, by associating the pericope with the resurrection, was making explicit what was implicit in the synoptics.

The final three chapters of the book are an attempt at a reconstruction of the life of Jesus;

"I have essayed an outline, and an interpretation, of the course of events, so far as this may be inferred from data in the four gospels. Inevitably this is to some extent conjectural. Informed conjecture, a legitimate tool of the historian, is often an indispensable tool to the historian of antiquity. For the result I do not claim more than a degree - as it seems to me a high degree - of probability."<sup>(99)</sup>

As Robinson saw it, Dodd's primary instinct, that of the historian returned to crown this book. The first notable feature of this outline is the extensive use made of the Fourth Gospel. This fulfils the claim made at the end of "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel".<sup>(100)</sup> In his use of the Fourth Gospel for this purpose, Dodd is unique among the so-called 'new questers'. To this outline we turn briefly.

As Dodd had attempted, over forty years before, in "The Authority of the Bible", he reconstructed the environment in which Jesus grew up from the situations described in the parables. The importance of the Fourth Gospel is seen even here. Whilst the early Dodd had seen no parables in the Fourth Gospel, he now attached some great importance to the life of Jesus in the carpenter's shop. This sprang, of course, not only from information in Mark and Matthew, but primarily from Dodd's discovery of the parable of the 'Apprenticed Son'. This may seem a fairly trivial point, but it serves to illustrate the importance attached to the Fourth Gospel in this reconstruction, and also as a warning for there is absolutely nothing in the parable that even suggests that Jesus had the carpenter's shop in view. Dodd himself had argued that the experience of the 'Apprenticed Son' was a 'commonplace' in the ancient world. There is little doubt that the importance attached to this parable is evidence of a predilection for the Fourth Gospel in this reconstruction. This is not surprising for not only had Dodd spent so many of his later years with the Fourth Gospel but he believed that it was the fullest expression of the significance of Christianity. Nonetheless it is discontinuous with his earlier statements on the subject. Certainly it shows Dodd's willingness to change his opinions but he overvalues the Fourth Gospel at the expense of the Synoptics in this reconstruction.

It is as though what Dodd wrote specifically of the Johannine Passion narrative - "It appears then that the Passion-narrative is given in the main as a straightforward story, with only a minimum of intruded interpretative elements"<sup>(101)</sup> - is applied to the entire Johannine historical

scheme. Time and again, positions implied in "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" are accepted. This makes explicit what was implicit there, that the Johannine tradition and presentation where it can be weighed was not found wanting. Thus Jesus is seen as 'an ally or even lieutenant'<sup>(102)</sup> of the Baptist, that because of the success of his mission in Judea, Jesus has to leave for Galilee, but this Galilean ministry was much less successful than he had hoped. As in "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel", John 4.43 and the Synoptic parallels are interpreted in this way, with no attempt to discuss the difficulties that Johannine redaction of this saying presents. In one way this mission was not without its popularity for the whole Galilean ministry culminated in the attempt to make Jesus king. John 6.15 is the sole surviving witness to this, and Dodd argued, as he done many years before, that "The fiasco of the abortive rising...had resulted in widespread desertions."<sup>(103)</sup> In this context, Jesus sought a pledge of loyalty from the Twelve; as in "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel", so now Dodd argued that these desertions prompted Jesus to ask, "Will you also go away?" To this question "Peter's profession of loyalty in an equally natural reply."<sup>(104)</sup> This was cited as classic instance of an occasion "Where the Johannine tradition appears to supplement the Synoptics in the sense of clarifying points left obscure."<sup>(105)</sup> The essential historicity of the Johannine accounts of the visits to Jerusalem is accepted, another instance of John complementing the Synoptics. On the other hand, the Synoptics have correctly placed the Cleansing of the Temple; John has moved it for theological reasons. It was this episode that forced the authorities to act.

"The debate was wound up by the High Priest Caiaphas who stated the case bluntly as he saw it: 'It is more to your interest that one man should die for the people than the whole nation should be destroyed.' In the nature of the case this cannot be taken as anything like 'minutes of the proceedings', but there is little doubt that it accurately sets out the case as the priest saw it."<sup>(106)</sup>

This was perhaps a less trenchant defence of the authenticity of the

saying than was offered in "The Prophecy of Caiaphas". Judas remained an enigma. In Dodd's reconstruction the Johannine tradition is preferred since the Synoptics show signs of the inevitable legends that would come to surround such monstrous treachery. Some psychological possibilities are canvassed but in the end John 13.2 "Is about as far as we can get."<sup>(107)</sup> Dodd asserted that the Jews were not competent to pass a death sentence. This was affirmed by all the Passion narratives and Dodd seems content with the essential historicity of the trial as seen through the Gospels, provided we note that the evangelists

"Were not concerned with nice points of legal procedure, nor indeed with chronological precision. Their narrative faithfully portrays the movement of the drama with its fundamental unity and continuity, even though in fact the interval between the arrest and the session of the council, and between that and the trial before Pilate may have been more considerable than appears."<sup>(108)</sup>

The Johannine tradition may have especially good information in the trial scenes since Dodd accepts the essential historicity of the disciple being known to the High Priest: this is "A hint that he (John) has good information at this point."<sup>(109)</sup> Throughout the reconstruction of the trial the Gospels are used to complement each other. There is some substance in both the political and religious charges. The blasphemy charge consisted mainly in the claim to forgive sins and the assertions, as suggested in John 5.18 and 10.33 and 36, that God was his father in a way that he was not the father of all Israelites. Politically there was a charge in terms of being king of the Jews. Whilst Dodd agreed that John cannot have had access to the actual words of Jesus about his lack of followers in arms, this "Defence would have been a valid one, corresponding to the facts, and Pilate could easily have drawn the inference for himself."<sup>(110)</sup> In his consideration of the Resurrection narratives, Dodd was not sure whether John 20.1-20 was a Johannine construction or "As near first-hand evidence as we could hope to get."<sup>(111)</sup> Initially he favoured the former

alternative because of the number of significant Johannine themes, but ultimately he opted for the latter conclusion. Finally, Dodd noted that the Resurrection narrative is unlike the rest of the Holy Week drama, which had the form of a connected narrative whereas the Resurrection narrative more naturally has the form of a number of detached incidents and in attempts to weave the incidents into a single whole John and Luke show signs of artificiality.

There is throughout this book, then, the normal Doddian stress on Christianity as a historical religion and the importance of the Incarnation as the fulfilment of history. This involved Dodd in a quest for the historical Jesus for there can be no other logical outcome of his position. A great deal of Dodd's work from the 1950's (and indeed, some from much earlier) were preparatory to this quest. Yet, even allowing for Robinson's reminder that only a professional scholar can sometimes realise how good a popular book is, and our own reading of it in the context of Dodd's more technical works, this is not a satisfactory quest. We have argued that the reconstruction is unsatisfactory partly because Dodd has fallen victim to the subjectivity he so feared and also because the complementary use of the Gospels (on which this book depends so heavily) is misconstrued. It is natural to apply some of Dodd's own words to it; "In the pre-critical period the aim of the student was to 'harmonise' it (the Fourth Gospel) with the other three."<sup>(112)</sup> In this book Dodd 'Harmonises' the Synoptics with the Fourth Gospel all too frequently. To be frank, in this book Dodd has, for the most part, been 'pre-critical'. At the end of "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" Dodd suggested

"The enterprise of working towards a clear and well based conception of the historical facts upon which our religion is founded is a promising one, and the mood of defeatism which for some time prevailed is rightly beginning to give way to a more hopeful resumption of the 'quest of the historical Jesus'. These larger tasks I have not essayed in this book, which is designed to clarify

one particular source of evidence, so that it may, as I hope, be available for use towards the great end of our studies."<sup>(113)</sup>

The definitive Doddian emphases are to be found in this quotation; the fact is that his attempt at "the great end of our studies" is unsatisfactory and may call in question some of the definitive emphases. This is so because of an early and late inconsistency to which we now turn.

#### An early and late inconsistency.

Characteristically Dodd is concerned with facts, the term 'Facts' occurs frequently in his writings. He has been criticised for this understanding of the nature of Kerygma. N. Perrin provides us with an appropriate example. In his review of "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" he wrote

"Perhaps the best way I can make my point here is to refer to the New English Bible translation of 1 Corinthians 15.3; 'I handed on to you the facts that had been imparted to me.' Whether or not Dodd is directly responsible for this translation it certainly represents his understanding of the essential nature of the kerygma, but it is not the only possible understanding and there are many who would reject it. Certainly there is no direct justification for 'facts' in the Greek text."<sup>(114)</sup>

Perrin went on to criticise by implication Dodd's understanding of the essential factual or historical nature of the ancient tradition behind the Fourth Gospel. Whilst the major discussion will come later, it is necessary to indicate Dodd's understanding of the evangelist's philosophical presuppositions;

"To a writer with the philosophical presuppositions of the evangelist there is no reason why a narrative should not be at the same time factually true and symbolic of a deeper truth since things and events in this world derive what reality they possess from the eternal Ideas which they embody. Thus the very nature of the symbolism employed by the evangelist reflects his fundamental

Weltanschauung. He writes in terms of a world in which phenomena - things and events - are a living moving image of the eternal, and not a veil of illusion to hide it, a world in which the Word is made flesh."<sup>(115)</sup>

Even here there is still stress on the factual and event character.

Dodd has not been totally consistent. In his review of Bernard's commentary Dodd was impatient with Bernard. He argued that

"Dr. Bernard will not have it that the evangelist is an allegorist. He does right, no doubt, to reject many of the more fanciful allegorical interpretations of ancient and modern commentators but in insisting on bald literalism he surely raises a barrier against the true understanding of a writer who, on any showing, well understood the value of symbolism."<sup>(116)</sup>

Dodd did less than justice to Bernard's discussion. Although the section is entitled "Not an allegorist", Bernard carefully distinguished between Christian and non-Christian allegorists; for the former facts are important. Thus Bernard wrote of the Fourth Evangelist: "He is not only a historian, but he is an interpreter of history."<sup>(117)</sup> This means that primarily "The evangelist intended to present narrative of fact, of the truth of which he himself was fully persuaded."<sup>(118)</sup> Here Dodd and Bernard have an identical picture of the Fourth Evangelist but from his criticism of Bernard we see Dodd less convinced of the historical nature of the Fourth Gospel than he became. In "The Founder of Christianity" Dodd argued.

"This use of symbolism is fundamentally poetical. It is not a flight into fancy. It means that facts are being viewed in depth, not superficially. This must be taken into account when we consider the stories of the miracles which have so large a place in some parts of the gospels. In the Fourth Gospel they are treated frankly as 'signs', that is symbols. Not that John thought that they did not happen but their happening was of less interest to him than their meaning....If anyone chooses to read the miracle stories as



pictorial symbols of the power of spiritual renewal which the first Christians found in their encounter with Jesus, without raising the question whether it all happened just like that, he is not far from the intention of John at least, and possibly of others." (119)

Here, too, Dodd asserted "The question of their (the miracles) factual accuracy has not the importance sometimes attached to it." (120) Some forty years before this Dodd put forward a similar view but with more concern for historicity;

"Lastly I come to the Gospel according to John. It is generally agreed that it was written later than any of the others. And on the face of it, it is very different. It is full of theology, of which there is only a minimum in the others....In fact, the Gospel is not in the first place a story of Jesus at all, but an interpretation of His life and teaching in the light of certain theological or philosophical ideas....When I say that the story of Jesus had become a symbol, I do not mean that he did not believe that it happened. He was that kind of mystic who believes that what happens in this workaday world is a way into the eternal, if you have the key. And he firmly believed that through what Jesus said and did and was, God had offered His own life to men." (121)

Here Dodd wants the same qualifications for 'Mystic' and 'symbol' that Bernard wanted for 'Allegory'.

In the "Founder of Christianity" there is a strange flight from that concern for historicity that so often characterises Dodd's work. Where he is concerned with the resolution of the problem it usually comes in terms of events carrying their own meaning with them;

"Either the interpretation through which the facts are presented was imposed upon them mistakenly - and in that case few facts remain which we can regard as strictly ascertained - or the interpretation was imposed by the events themselves, as they were

experienced in an historical situation, and gave rise to historical consequences - and in that case we do know in the main what the facts were."<sup>(122)</sup>

If we turn to Dodd's handling of the feeding miracle we find that it is strangely unsatisfying. The episode was the turning point of the ministry as Dodd understood it, yet it is not certain whether the feeding of the five thousand is a sign or mystery. Dodd seems very concerned that we do not assume that it is a miracle.<sup>(123)</sup> He is suspicious of any attempt "To make the story intelligible or credible by rationalising it."<sup>(124)</sup> With insight John has interpreted it eucharistically but what of the nature of the original event? Dodd suggests that "The three earlier gospels get little further than a naive wonder that so little should have fed so many. John knows the answer at which the church arrived after much pondering in the light of later experience: 'I am the bread of life.'"<sup>(125)</sup> True indeed, but that hardly helps in a reconstruction of historical events. Moreover, it shows Dodd evading the crucial question at the very point where he found it embarrassing.

In "The Founder of Christianity" there is a blend of the early and classical Dodd and the blend is not altogether satisfactory. There is here an impatience with certain questions of historicity; this recalls the early Dodd but it is utterly out of line with the classical stance. It is difficult to decide whether this deviation involves withdrawal from the classical stance. There is a confusion in this latest book and it would be unwise to draw any firm conclusions. What it does suggest is that ultimately Dodd could not offer what his classical position demanded. Revelation demands event plus meaning, and at times Dodd is not interested in the historicity or factual nature of the event. Dodd's attempt at a 'new quest', then, on a most important issue belies his classical stance. Yet it still remains the most likely possibility that his classical stance should not be judged by this rather unsatisfactory book.

Dodd's understanding of the sacrament of the Eucharist and Christian  
Preaching.

As we have seen, Dodd's understanding of the world-view of the Fourth Evangelist allows for the broadly sacramental.<sup>(126)</sup> In part, he would have agreed with S.S. Smalley that

"If we say, as we are doing, that John is a sacramentalist, this does not mean that he is concerned only about the two sacraments of baptism and eucharist. Rather, he is concerned about 'the sacramental' - the fact that since the incarnation there can be a new dimension to life, and that is in the time of Jesus, so now, the spirit can give life to matter in a qualitatively new way."<sup>(127)</sup>

Whilst Smalley argues for this since the Incarnation, Dodd believed that this had always been there. The new dimension since the Incarnation has been the sacramental re-presentation or remembrance of specific events of the life of the Incarnate one. It is to this possibility that we turn as we review Dodd's understanding of the Eucharist. This understanding springs from the prior understanding of the historical nature of the events of the Incarnation.

There is no doubt that the Eucharist was important for Dodd. In a letter written just before his engagement to Phyllis Terry, an Anglican, he wrote, "She has found her way through to a religious position in which we find common ground and can help one another; and in the Sacrament we both find our strength."<sup>(128)</sup> This was not, of course, the only or indeed the major reason for Dodd's placing so high a value on this sacrament. Personal and theological interest neatly coincided. It is, perhaps, worth noting that in placing so high a value on the Eucharist Dodd was not typical of his denomination.

While this discussion will major on the understanding of the sacrament qua sacrament in the context of Dodd's understanding of the authority of history, it will broaden out into a discussion of his very favourable

review of Cullmann's "Les Sacrements dans l'Évangile Johannique: La vie de Jésus et le culte de l'église primitive" (129)

Dodd's first Biblical article, published in 1911, was entitled "Eucharistic Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel". (130) This is important in its own right and in the on-going assessment of his Johannine work since it also raises the possibility that as early as 1911 Dodd was interpreting the Fourth Gospel in Platonic categories. To this article we turn later. The definitive Doddian stance may be seen from "The Eschatological element in the New Testament and its permanent significance", (131) "The Eucharist in relationship to the fellowship of the church", (132) "The background of the Fourth Gospel", (133) "History and the Gospel", (134) and "The Prologue to the Fourth Gospel and Christian worship", (135) whilst the same understanding is to be clearly seen in "The Parables of the Kingdom". (136) Any discussion of this definitive understanding of the Eucharist insofar as it does not bear directly on the Fourth Gospel must of necessity be brief. Whilst the occasion of the paper must be borne in mind (it was presented to a gathering of English and German theologians at Chichester in 1931) the value that Dodd saw in the Eucharist may be seen in the concluding sentence; "The Eucharist, rather than the episcopate, is the true sacramentum unitatis." (137) Within this article two of the dominant features of Dodd's theology may be clearly seen; "The historical and the mystical elements of our religion are perfectly fused in the Sacrament." (138) Dodd emphasised the eschatological character of the Eucharist; "As the hope of the imminent Parousia faded, the transmutation of eschatology implicit in the preaching of Jesus was carried through, and the Eucharist remained and remains the repository of all that was permanent and real in the eschatology of the early church." (139) There may be a latent platonism in the assertion that "Hence the Church at the Table of the Lord is a sort of enclave of the supernatural order within the order of 'this world'." Gathered with their glorified Lord the people of God 'taste the powers of the world to come.'" (140)

Dodd, then, argues that it is necessary to understand the eschatological background of the Eucharist; "In its origin and in its governing ideas it (the Eucharist) may be described as the sacrament of realised eschatology."<sup>(141)</sup> As he develops this, classical Doddian emphases come to the fore; "Above all, in the sacrament of the Eucharist the Church re-capitulates the historic crisis in which Christ came, lived, died and rose again, and finds in it the 'efficacious sign' of eternal life in the Kingdom of God."<sup>(142)</sup> At times Dodd has a deficient understanding of 'Remember' with its rich Biblical and liturgical associations; "When we cite the words 'This is my body' and do quod ipse auctor facit, we, the Church, remember His speaking and acting thus."<sup>(143)</sup> For most of the time Dodd is aware of the rich associations of 'Remember'; a few examples must suffice. He argued,

"We seem justified in concluding that from an early date the breaking of the bread was associated with the realized presence of the risen Lord....It is in this (the Pentecostal experience in which present and future are held together) atmosphere that we must place the primitive Sacrament of the Breaking of the Bread. Its eschatological character we have already noted; it looked forward 'till He come'. But it also expressed the conviction that Christ, risen and triumphant, was even now with His people, sharing with them the benefits of His finished work."<sup>(144)</sup>

The definitive Doddian stance emerged clearly;

"All through, the remembrance of the coming of Christ in history, and the hope of His eternal Kingdom, are inextricably bound together with the sense of His presence with His Church. The worshippers are placed within that moment at which the Kingdom of God came, and experience sacramentally its coming both as a fact secure within the historical order and as the eternal reality whose full meaning can never be known to men on earth."<sup>(145)</sup> The definitive expression of this view is to be seen in "History and the Gospels".

"In its central sacrament the Church places itself ever anew within the eschatological crisis in which it had its origin. Here Christ is set before us incarnate, crucified and risen, and we partake of the benefits of his finished work, as contemporaries with it. We are neither merely recalling a story of the past, nor merely expressing and nourishing a hope for the future, but experiencing in one significant rite the reality of the coming of Christ, which is both His coming in humiliation and His coming in glory....This contemporaneity must not be confused with the timeless 'now' of the mystics. For that which the Church experiences is not just an eternal reality symbolically set forth under the forms of space, time and matter. It is a slice of the actual history of the world....It happened and we are there." <sup>(146)</sup> (italicized in the original.)

He argued elsewhere "A non-sacramental Christianity tends to become non-supernatural, or else takes refuge in a mysticism which is not distinctively Christian because it has lost the living link with history." <sup>(147)</sup>

Thus, in the Eucharist Dodd found that perfect fusion of the experiential and the historical which was as much a part of his theology as it was of the theology of the Fourth Evangelist.

#### Dodd's appreciation of Cullmann's work.

Bultmann was among the scholars who argued that the Fourth Evangelist wrote to oppose the sacramental cultus of the Church. If this were so, then Dodd would have agreed with Kysar that the Fourth Gospel may well be entitled "John, the maverick Gospel". <sup>(148)</sup> Kysar goes beyond Bultmann in his assertion that "The evangelist had no access to the stories of the origin of the sacraments and his Christian community did not observe them." <sup>(149)</sup> Dodd's first Biblical article contested such a position. He also opposed Bultmann's theory; "The curious theory that the Fourth Evangelist intended to repudiate the sacramental cultus of the Church is one which has always called for a robust handling of the evidence, in face of general probability." <sup>(150)</sup> He opposed this theory not only on the grounds of general

probability, but also because it rested so heavily upon the possibility of later interpolation into the text to make the Fourth Gospel conform to 'orthodox' Christian opinion and practice. Whilst Dodd was not, at this time, impressed by such theories, he knew the difficulties of attempting to refute them; "To such an extent there is no direct reply, since no one can demonstrate that a passage is not an interpolation, provided it can be excised without leaving the context actually ungrammatical."<sup>(151)</sup> The only possible reply was that offered with 'Complete success',<sup>(152)</sup> by Cullmann in demonstrating that "The sacramental idea....belongs to the basic structure of Johannine thought and gives cohesion to the whole picture of the person and work of Christ which the Fourth Gospel offers."<sup>(153)</sup> So Dodd accepted. with enthusiasm Cullmann's argument that to understand the intention of the Fourth Evangelist we must note that "The events he records must be apprehended on two levels, as occurrences in the past, and as livingly affecting his readers in the present. The events are 'remembered' in this pregnant sense, and such remembrance is prompted by the Holy Spirit in the Church."<sup>(154)</sup> This is very close to the idea which Dodd himself had put forward in "The Eucharist in relation to the fellowship of the Church" and elsewhere. As Cullmann developed the argument we read "In the latter period it is the Church's acts of worship which provide the setting in which the events of the past become the medium of God's saving act in the present. In the life of the Church the two sacraments which are the centre of Christian worship play the part which is played by the 'signs' in the records of the life of Jesus."<sup>(155)</sup> With two criticisms Dodd **proceeded** to concluded a laudatory review;

"Especially valuable, perhaps, is the demonstration which Dr. Cullmann has given at various points that the  $\sigma\gamma\mu\epsilon\iota\alpha$  and the sacraments have in common an eschatological reference. Thus he shows (with reference to Apoc. iii.20) that the feast of Cana is at once a type of the eucharist and an anticipation of the messianic banquet....

Dr. Cullmann has made an important contribution to the understanding

both of the life of Jesus and of the Christian cultus in their mutual relations as contemplated in the Johannine presentation of the Gospel." (156)

Dodd valued Cullmann's work more highly than did many of his colleagues for whom Cullmann was something of an 'ultra-sacramentalist'. Dodd recognised here a certain amplification of ideas that had always been congenial to him, although, so far as I can detect, he made little use of Cullmann's work in any of his own subsequent work on the Fourth Gospel. It is also fair to note that British scholarship generally was favourably disposed towards seeing sacramental tendencies in the Fourth Gospel. Examples are provided by Barrett, Hoskyns and Lightfoot. So, in this regard, Dodd was typical of British scholarship, although no one has so warmly welcomed Cullmann's work. It is, moreover, hard to agree that Cullmann's work, important as it undoubtedly is, is the definitive refutation of Bultmann's position. This is so because there is the problem of differentiating between the broadly sacramental and the specifically Christian sacramental. That refutation is to be found in Dodd's understanding of the Christian sacraments and Christian preaching.

#### "Eucharistic Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel".

While the alleged Platonism of this article will be discussed later, it is discussed here as Dodd's first published understanding of the Eucharist. Dodd argued that the Fourth Gospel is "The product of a period when the ordinances of the Church were already well established, and when the symbolism of the sacraments was generally recognised, although not yet fully developed.." (157) Thus the Fourth Evangelist was not free to create his own symbolism but free to develop it. (158) In his explanation of the Fourth Evangelist's omission of the Eucharistic character of the Last Supper, Dodd argued that the feeding miracle became "An alternative historical embodiment of the eucharistic idea." (159) It is important to note the sense in which 'Historical' is being used here; in the sense that the early Church interpreted the feeding miracle eucharistically. (160)



Dodd argued that "It was this secondary form of the eucharist meal that is made central in the Fourth Gospel."<sup>(161)</sup> The element of wine does not appear while 'blood' is mentioned 'casually' and for the sake of 'symmetry'.<sup>(162)</sup> The topic of the discourse is food which abides unto eternal life.<sup>(163)</sup> Dodd argued that this association of the Eucharistic feast with eternal life is not new; although it does not appear in Paul or the Synoptics, it may be found in the Didache, which in all probability is more primitive than the Fourth Gospel.<sup>(164)</sup> He concluded "The author of the Fourth Gospel therefore appears to be combining for the first time two early ideas which attached to the Eucharist; that of feeding on the flesh, or on the body, of Christ and that of spiritual food conferring immortality."<sup>(165)</sup> As the exposition proceeds, Dodd notes that;

"The next step is make it clear that no material manna is meant; the manna was itself a symbol and a promise: 'The real bread from heaven (ὁ ἄρτος ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὁ ἀληθινός)

as opposed to the merely figurative, is ὁ καταβαινὼν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ζῶν δίδους τῷ κόσμῳ

'he' (or 'that') which cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world."<sup>(166)</sup>

Dodd argued for a 'mystic' feeding on Christ in the Eucharist. We have already noted the qualifications that Dodd wanted for 'Mystic'; they are not present here where he argues "In fact, to feed upon Christ is to receive His life into oneself, just as Christ Himself has the life of God the Father in Him. (vi.57). He who in this sense feeds upon Christ has found the food of immortality, and will live for eternity."<sup>(167)</sup>

Dodd was impressed by the omission of certain features. Initially he was concerned by the omission of any thought of the unity of believers which is a prominent thought both in Paul and the Didache. More significantly in terms of the classical Doddian stance that the Fourth Gospel is the most penetrating expression of Christianity another omission is "There is no reference to the coming Kingdom, of which the holy supper

was a foretaste....In the Fourth Gospel the idea is faintly reflected only in the allusion to the 'last day', in which the eternal life conveyed by the mystic feeding upon Christ will be consummated. This change is quite in accord with the general tendency of the book."<sup>(168)</sup> Moreover, Dodd argued that the emphasis, which in the earlier accounts had fallen on the 'cup saying', is replaced by the symbolism of the vine; "But by the use made of it he excludes the most striking feature of the cup-symbolism in the earliest tradition. The symbolism as he employs it permits no reference to the shed blood of Christ, a reference which is prominent in the early accounts of the supper."<sup>(169)</sup> The omission was deliberate;

"The 'highest' doctrine of the subject hitherto promulgated had centred about the sacrificial significance of the Cup. The author of the Gospel wished to concentrate upon another side of eucharistic thought....John....is preoccupied, not with sacrificial theory, but with his doctrine of mystical communion. It is not a redemptive transaction that determines the attainment of 'eternal life' (or 'salvation') but the communication of the divine life of Christ to the believer."<sup>(170)</sup>

John accomplished this partly by the introduction of the figure of the vine "But the weight of his re-interpretation rests mainly upon a fresh exposition of ideas latent in the neglected symbol of the bread."<sup>(171)</sup>

Paul had seen in this no more than the unity of believers; an idea that Dodd described as "Quite non-theological".<sup>(172)</sup> Paul's main interest had been in the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist, an idea much more easily developed through the 'cup symbolism'.

Thus, Dodd placed before his readers the notion of two radically different understandings of the Eucharist in the early Church. Whilst there is no doubt that the classical Doddian understanding of the Eucharist is not to be found here, and, indeed, there are emphases that are strange when set in the wider Doddian context, there is still some emphasis on the Incarnational. There is here implicitly the classical Doddian

picture of the brilliance of the Fourth Evangelist as an interpreter;

"Here then was a rich vein of Christian thought as yet almost completely unworked. This John makes his own. Eternal life or salvation, comes by the communication of the life of Christ, the eating of His 'flesh'. In order that this might be possible Christ 'gave His flesh for the life of the world' or to use equivalent expressions from other parts of the Gospel 'laid down His life' for men (x.11;xv.13) or 'dedicated Himself on their behalf'. (xvii.19) On the part of men, this life is appropriated through *θεωρία*, the contemplation of Christ in His eternal being as the Son of God, and through *πλότης*, the response of the human personality in the act of faith to the vision so presented." (173)

#### Dodd's understanding of Christian Preaching.

As he had emphasised the 'Real Presence' of the Christ-event in the Eucharist, so too Dodd emphasised its presence in Christian preaching;

"The kerygma itself is no more than a rehearsal of the history in which the Kingdom of God came.....The Gospel itself can never be other than it was at the beginning. Paul's description of his preaching to the Galatians - 'before whose eyes Christ was placarded as crucified' - indicates what the character of the preaching at its centre must always be: it is re-presentation of the history of Jesus: it is designed to place the hearers in the very presence of the historical event and so to expose them to the power of God which worked in that event." (174)

This emphasis also finds its classic expression in "History and the Gospel":

"The Church in proclaiming this Gospel is the instrument of a divine intervention in history which is not limited by the unworthiness of the instrument.....But this divine intervention which is mediated by every preaching of the Gospel is the same that was accomplished in the death and resurrection of Christ....We set it down, then, that the relation of the Church to history is in the

first place to be sought in its preaching of the Gospel, an act by which the Church itself lives, and by which it mediates the power of God to every generation." (175) This view corresponds precisely to the nature of the Apostolic Preaching that Dodd himself had discovered. Naturally, he was to relate preaching to the Sacraments;

"The Church itself is an historically continuous and self-identical society, whose beginning lies in particular facts of the past, without which it has no meaning. To these facts Gospel and Sacrament bear witness. The Gospel recites the historical events of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, by which our redemption was effected. In the central sacrament of the Church we recall and set forth these events. We recall them, but in the recalling of them they are made present too, since there is in them that which transcends the division of time into past, present and future. Yet they remain historical. Our approach to the eternal God, therefore, is not purely 'mystical'. It is mediated through historical events which are re-enacted in our worship." (176)

Since Dodd emphasises the 'Real Presence' of these historical events in the preaching, it is appropriate to make a contrast with Bultmann. As is well known, Bultmann took a much more sceptical view of the possibility of the use of the Gospels for a recovery of the historical events of the ministry of Christ; "I do indeed think that we can know almost nothing concerning the life and personality of Jesus, since the early Christian sources show no interest in either, and are moreover fragmentary and legendary; and other sources about Jesus do not exist." (177) Yet Bultmann argued too, for the importance of preaching;

"The salvation occurrence is nowhere present except in the proclaiming, accosting, demanding and promising word of the preaching. A merely 'reminiscent' historical account referring to what happened in the past cannot make the salvation-occurrence visible. It means that the salvation occurrence continues to take place in the proclamation of the word. The salvation-occurrence is eschatological.

occurrence just in this fact, that it does not become a fact of the past but constantly takes place anew in the present." (178)

Recently, Kysar has made an easy and inaccurate contrast between Dodd and Bultmann. (179) Of the position of Dodd, outlined above, Kysar writes, "I should draw attention to the past tense used in the description, especially in the last verb - the power of God worked. Christian preaching is primarily a pointing to the past." (180) While Dodd's position is certainly not identical with Bultmann's, Kysar has not only misunderstood the essential difference but has offered a false understanding of Dodd's own position by offering a less than complete quotation by omitting that part of it which is patently capable of a dynamic understanding, and by choosing to emphasise the significance of the past tense rather than "Designed to place the hearers in the very presence of the historical event and so expose them to the power of God which worked in that event." He has also omitted from consideration Dodd's dynamic understanding of the Eucharist. What is at issue between Dodd and Bultmann is the very real question of the necessity of historical events for revelation. If we do indeed know nothing about Christ, it is, on Doddian grounds, impossible for there to be either revelation or Christian preaching. This is the essential difference between Dodd and Bultmann. Whilst Dodd may not have found existential categories attractive, yet, with his understanding of the dynamism of both preaching and the sacraments, Dodd is indeed not far from Bultmann in emphasising the "Proclaiming, accosting, demanding and promising word of the preaching." (181) Can this not be described in Doddian terms as exposure to "The power of God which worked in the event?" (182)

Similarly, Kysar has made an inaccurate contrast between the eschatologies of Dodd and Bultmann. He argues that

"Dodd's 'realised eschatology', which utilizes the categories of Heilsgeschichte to mark the decisive fulfilment in the Christ event, points to the past to declare that the 'Age to come' has indeed become reality. Bultmann's 'existential eschatology', on

the other hand, points not to the past but to the present proclamation of the Word, and in the categories of existentialism declares that the eschaton awaits the believer in his life or death decision regarding the kerygma. The difference thus would seem to root in the respective philosophies of history operative in the concepts of eschatology. Dodd's positivistic understanding of history necessitates a concern for that which is 'past'. That concern is entirely absent from Bultmann's position. His existential understanding of history gives to the category of the 'past' a new meaning, one which essentially remoulds the past into the present." (183)

Kysar is right to draw attention to the Doddian emphasis that the Christ-event is the definitive event of history, indeed its fulfilment, but he is totally amiss in his understanding of this as involving a mere looking back to the past. He has entirely overlooked the significance of the emphasis that "We enter ( my italics ) rather into the full meaning of history at its centre." (184) Certainly Dodd and Bultmann operate with different philosophies of history, but it is wrong to describe Dodd's as 'positivistic'. What is much more to the point is that they operate with very different philosophies of revelation.

Some of Dodd's work anticipates that of D.A. Aune in "The cultic setting of realised eschatology in early Christianity." (185) The thesis of the book is presented in the section entitled "Worship in the Spirit as a proleptic experience of eschatological existence." (186) For Aune the Eucharist is central; "The eucharist undoubtedly forms the central moment of this setting within the cultic worship of the community in which the exalted Jesus, now present in Parousia splendour, pronounces both blessing and woe, salvation and judgement through the cult personnel." (187) Aune finds this understanding primarily in the Fourth Gospel and the Odes of Solomon, which he considers a Christian book. He devotes by far the largest part of his study to the Fourth Gospel. He comments that the usual

approach to the problem of eschatology in this gospel is to state what by now is a 'commonplace' of New Testament criticism, that "Realised eschatology achieves a greater dominance in the Gospel of John than any other New Testament book."<sup>(188)</sup> One problem is to account for the juxtaposition of the realised and futuristic eschatological statements (but this is a general New Testament problem) but, as Aune rightly sees,

"The focal point of the problem of Johannine eschatology is not the task of solving the paradoxical juxtaposition of present and future statements - although that certainly is an aspect of the problem - but rather the task of understanding the significance of the dominance of the realised aspect of eschatological salvation within the Fourth Gospel."<sup>(189)</sup>

Some scholars speak in terms of 'reinterpretation', 'transvaluation' 'transmutation' and the like. Behind most of these arguments is the assumption that the Fourth Evangelist was concerned to make an essentially Hebraic concept comprehensible to the Greek world. Dodd wrote of both 'transformation' and 'transmutation';

"It is not therefore accurate to say that the Fourth Evangelist has abandoned the eschatological setting of the original kerygma. He has transformed it by altering the perspective. The formula often used, that John has turned eschatology into 'mysticism' (if that is the right word) is based upon a fulfilment of history, within history; and this is the essential burden of eschatology in its present form."<sup>(190)</sup>

In this the Fourth Evangelist is not venturing upon something new;

"His formula  $\epsilon\rho\chi\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota \omega\rho\alpha \kappa\alpha\iota \nu\upsilon\upsilon \epsilon\sigma\tau\iota\nu$ , with the emphasis on the  $\nu\upsilon\upsilon \epsilon\sigma\tau\iota\nu$ , without excluding the element of futurity, is, I believe, not merely an acute theological definition, but is essentially historical, and probably represents the authentic teaching of Jesus as veraciously as any formula could."<sup>(191)</sup>

In part, Dodd could have agreed with Aune, "That not only did the

expectation of the Parousia with its attendant constellation of imagery affect the present actualization of that event within the cult, but the way in which the Parousia was actualised in present cultic experience... also radically affected the way in which the Parousia was conceptualised as a future event." (192) Dodd would have agreed that the present experience of Christ in the cult and the re-presentation of the Christ event in the cult had an effect on the way in which the Christ event was described but not only would he have stressed the historical nature of the events more clearly than Aune, he would also have diminished appreciably the reference to the Parousia. In the cult "The hour comes and now is" is a present experience.

Certainly there is in Dodd's understanding no mere looking back to the past.

Can Dodd's theology be described as Platonic?

It is indeed possible to describe Dodd's theology as Platonic. Some of his statements invite such a description;

"It is obvious that it (the Fourth Gospel) has an affinity with Platonic thought. When John speaks of 'real bread' as distinguished from ordinary loaves, of the 'real vine' and 'real light', a Platonist would readily understand him to be speaking of the eternal 'ideas' in contrast to their phenomenal representatives. It is not necessary to suppose that the Evangelist was acquainted with Plato's writings." (193)

Moreover, he can argue that "The mediation of the eternal through the temporal is the presupposition of the sacrament." (194) Certainly it is not inconsistent with his understanding of the world view of the evangelist. Nor indeed is it other than compatible with the title of the Harvard tercentenary volume, which neatly encapsulates his view of Christianity in particular, it was called "Independence, convergence and borrowings in institutions, thought and art." Dodd's article was entitled "Hellenism and Christianity". There is no doubt that Dodd thought that



Platonism was thoroughly compatible with Biblical thought, but Dodd did not rest there totally. In his contribution to the Harvard tercentenary volume Dodd argued that the Fourth Evangelist went considerably beyond the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews,

"It is clearer than ever that the Christian Gospel, while accepting the Greek conceptions as its fitting vehicle, is challenging the Greek mind to re-think the problem of the relation of time to eternity. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has done little more than state the problem by placing side by side the historical and the suprahistorical character of the work of Christ. The matter is carried a step farther in the Fourth Gospel. The author of this work....has deliberately and expressly transposed the Christian Gospel from eschatological categories derived from Judaism to mystical categories derived from Greek thought - whether derived directly from Greek sources or from Hellenistic Judaism is a question beside the point."<sup>(195)</sup>

The paragraph concludes "What we have here is a strikingly successful attempt to make an harmonious and unified whole out of elements of Jewish and Hellenistic thought."<sup>(196)</sup> Had Dodd's thought ended there, there would have been no doubt that Dodd would have accepted the label 'Platonic' but as he was to write later - and I think this is the classical stance - "This means that we are concerned with something going far beyond a mere fusion of Hellenic and Hebraic thought. Like Abt Vogler, who in his music made 'of three sounds not a fourth but a star', John has made out of two hemispheres of thought and experience, joined in a single term (Logos) a new category to comprehend a new and unique fact."<sup>(197)</sup>

Any discussion is made difficult by the lack of a satisfactory definition of 'Platonism'. In Barrett's words,

"Plato, however, in the first century after Christ was both more and less than a great personal teacher of a philosophical system; he was an atmosphere, absorbed though not understood by many who

had never read his works. He had given definite expression to the notion of a real world, invisible and eternal, of which the world of appearance and time-sequence was but a transient and imperfect copy. Out of this contrast came the conception of mind, far superior to flesh, and the ideal life of abstraction and contemplation, in which the mind freed from matter and fixed upon the truly real, became one with God, the Idea of the Good."(198)

Dodd had given a similar 'thumbnail' sketch.(199)

The significant point is that Dodd's understanding of the importance and reality of the Incarnation and his understanding of the Eucharist are in effect the reversal of Platonism.

"The Christian Gospel...affirmed that such knowledge (of God) is given by the Son of God who came to earth in the flesh - that is to say in an actual, historical human life. The world of our ordinary experience is consequently no longer a realm of mere illusion, but is capable of becoming a means of communion with the highest realities. That the Christian faith is thus rooted in the concrete, the actual, the historical has been a constant theme all through the epistle. Now at the end the author emphasises the other side; it is at the same time concerned with the supra-historical, the eternal and the ultimately real."(200)

In this conviction the Fourth Evangelist and the author of the First Epistle of John are at one. This classical Doddian understanding can easily be demonstrated; "But whether *λογος* as rational principle, or *λογος* as word, is most prominent in any given context, it is always as incarnate (italicized in original) that John finds the *λογος* to be the revelation of the eternal God."(201) Again,

"From the standpoint of the history of religion it is not the Logos-doctrine of the Fourth Gospel that is its new and original contribution to religious thought, and not its speculative philosophy at all: it is the announcement that the revelation of the

Godhead is to be sought in words and deeds, the life and death of a Person who taught in Palestine and was crucified under Pontius Pilate. From this central idea the whole scheme of Johannine thought proceeds, and by it the conceptions he derives from non-Christian sources are remoulded into a Christian theology."(202)

As he put it, writing of John 1.14, "This challenging statement, with all its implications worked out in the Gospel story, dislocated the whole philosophical scheme (my italics), and built up out of its own elements a radically new kind of religious philosophy."(203)

As Dodd understands this philosophy insofar as it is represented in the Fourth Gospel, - and it is for Dodd classically represented there, - it cannot accurately be described as Platonic. It is Incarnational. In this it is one with the insistence on the authority of history and the stress on the specifically Christian nature of the sacraments of Baptism and notably Eucharistic. What Platonist could accept this?

"From a Hellenistic point of view the climax of the argument, so regarded, would be sheer anti-climax. For the aim of any such argument in a Hellenistic writer would be to show how the eternal reality, after being contaminated with matter in nature and in man, is released from all such contamination and restored to purity of essence. But in the Prologue the *λογος* relapses (as it would appear to a Hellenistic thinker) into matter (*σαρξ*) at the crucial point. But for John this point is really crucial, in the sense that it is the point from which alone (my italics) we can truly discern and acknowledge the reality of the divine glory, whether in nature or in human history."(204)

While it has been argued that the classical Doddian understanding of the Fourth Evangelist does not allow for him to be called a Platonist, there are points in Dodd's understanding that have led certain scholars so to consider the Fourth Evangelist. This has also led some of these scholars to consider Dodd himself as one who joined together Hebraic and

Hellenic concepts in the interests of making Christianity comprehensible to our world. This discussion will be concluded with a brief view of these positions, but it must be firmly stated at the outset that, whilst we agree that Dodd has so welded these concepts, the result would not inevitably be Hellenistic generally or Platonic specifically. It could only be so if the Hebrew were subsumed by the Hellenic.

Kysar argues that Dodd's very first Biblical article is significant in this respect; we have already discussed it with reference to Dodd's understanding of the Eucharist, and so our discussion here is limited to the possibility of it disclosing a Platonism in Dodd and the Fourth Evangelist. Kysar argues that "A careful reading of Dodd's first published study of the Fourth Gospel...will disclose that even in 1911 Dodd was determined to understand Johannine theology in terms of Philonic-Platonic categories."<sup>(205)</sup> In a footnote he directs us specifically to the concept of *θεωρεῖν* but it would appear that Kysar has in fact not seen the significance of Dodd's understanding of the Fourth Evangelist's teaching. It is not just the concept of *θεωρεῖν* but of *θεωρεῖν* and *πιστεύειν*; "This contemplation of Christ and this faith in Him are symbolised in the eating of the Bread, which is His flesh."<sup>(206)</sup> Whilst it is not possible to see the classical Doddian understanding in its fullness, there is enough to suggest that it is not totally Platonic;

"Eternal life, or salvation, comes by the communication of the life of Christ, the eating of His 'flesh'. In order that this might be possible Christ 'gave His flesh for the life of the world', or to equivalent expressions from other parts of the Gospel, 'laid down His life' for men....On the part of men, this life is appropriated through *θεωρεῖν*, the contemplation of Christ in His eternal being as the Son of God, and through *πιστεύειν*, the response of the human personality in the act of faith to the vision so presented."<sup>(207)</sup>

There may indeed be a degree of latent Platonism here but the development of this idea in Dodd's later writings needs to be considered.

This is to be found in Dodd's understanding of the *λογος* ; the classical expression of this is to be found in summary in "The Prologue to the Fourth Gospel and Christian worship" where he maintained "That term (logos) brings together two distinct modes of human thought and experience, the Hellenic and the Hebraic. Both modes enter into Christian worship."<sup>(208)</sup> An identical view is expressed in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel". A double root for the term is suggested and from this double root springs one of the characteristic features of the Gospel. "His (the Fourth Evangelist's) Logos is not simply the uttered word or command of God: it is the meaning, plan or purpose of the universe, conceived as transcendent as well as immanent, as the thought of God, formed within the eternal Mind and projected into objectivity."<sup>(209)</sup> From this comes one of the most characteristic features of the Gospel; "...the argument constantly moves on two levels, and the *prima facie* meaning carries with it a further meaning, which comes to light only when the passage is re-read in view of the gospel as a whole."<sup>(210)</sup> So we find "The Logos became (*italicized in original*) the *σάρξ* or human nature which He bore. The life of Jesus is the history of the Logos, as incarnate, and this must be upon the stage of limited time, the same thing as the history of the Logos in perpetual relations with man and the world."<sup>(211)</sup> It has already been demonstrated that in the classical Doddian position the Incarnation is crucial.

Kysar has mistakenly considered the early Doddian articles as though they were definitive for Dodd's later understanding. Once he had embarked upon this course, he could make his case easily. It can be illustrated from one of Dodd's writings in 1923, "The eschatological element in the New Testament and its permanent significance." There we read,

"But in more progressive circles (contrasted with those of the Apocalypse and the Synoptics apocalypses) particularly those which were under the influence of the Apostle Paul, the feverish impatience of the first days gradually subsided into a calmer faith in the absolute reality of the Lord's presence and power even here and now,

combined with a certainty that the goal of an absolute sovereignty of Christ would one day be achieved....In this gradual reduction of the original emphasis on eschatology there was the opportunity for the change which the coming of Christ had made to be more fully appreciated. That mystical union of the Church with her Lord, which meant so much for Paul, was a feature proper to the miraculous age when the revelation of the Messiah had already loosed the bands of the obsolete world-order. In proportion as this aspect of Christianity received emphasis the expected return of the Lord diminished in importance. In the Epistle to the Ephesians the thought of the Church as Christ's mystical body is already on the way to supersede the hope of the Parousia and the Fourth Gospel completes what Paul had well begun. Here the mystical communion of the Christian with his Lord is timeless, independent of the march of events. We have all but passed over into a form of religion which substitutes deliverance of the soul from the evil world for the hope of world-salvation. Later, as the Church became neo-Platonist in the main tendency of its philosophy, though retaining the expectation of a Last Judgement, the attainment of individual salvation through sacrament and the entry of the individual into bliss at death practically replaced the sense of the divine purpose in history."<sup>(212)</sup>

Dodd saw some gains here; "Probably most of us are conscious of a certain sense of relief from fantastic ideas which we cannot share as we follow Paul and John in the development of Christian thought away from pure eschatology."<sup>(213)</sup> It is just as important to note that Dodd felt there were losses as well. The very first loss mentioned was that of "A very firm grip on history, which saved it (the early Church) from the mystical vagueness of much contemporary religion."<sup>(214)</sup> This 'firm grip on history' characterised Dodd's own theology and that of the Fourth Evangelist as he understood it. The classical Doddian position is here in embryo, even if there is much that is also loosely 'Platonic';

"Christian thought cannot rest in a pure mysticism, to which the objects of ordinary experience are mere illusion. Nor does it see in the movements of the world (with some modern philosophers) merely the thrusting of blind instinct into the unknown. It sees in history the real working-out of a divine purpose - not a rigidly determined destiny, but a true personal purpose morally conceived, in which we can share." (215)

Whilst it would be idle to pretend either that there has been no movement in Dodd's thought since 1923, or that it finds its classical expression there, there is no doubt that neither Dodd's own theology nor that of the Fourth Evangelist, as he understands it, can be called Platonic, precisely because there is both an authority of History and more significantly a reality to history. As we conclude this discussion we note that Kysar is correct in his assertion that "His (Dodd's) interpretation in general is an effort to synthesize the Hebraic concept of reality as historical act and deed and the Platonic concept of reality as eternal Idea finding expression in particular forms." (216) It is our contention that in both his own theology and that of the Fourth Evangelist as he understood it the Hebraic finally dominates precisely because of the crucial nature of the Incarnation. Moreover, Kysar has ignored Dodd's claim that the earliest Christian theology with its application of prophecy guaranteed the essential Hebraic character of Christian theology however widely Greek categories might be used for its expression.

Certainly Dodd's understanding of the Fourth Evangelist enables him to interpret the Fourth Gospel here in Hebraic categories and there in Greek categories. It is equally true to assert that the interpretation starts from the specifically Christian understanding. Kysar was not wrong in asserting that "The historical judgement that the fourth evangelist welded the Platonic and Hebraic perspectives into one for the propagation of the Christian faith may suggest Dodd's own commitment to both of these perspectives and his interest in articulating the Christian faith by means

of a blending of these perspectives."<sup>(217)</sup> What is deficient in the whole of Kysar's discussion is that he does not allow for the primacy of the distinctively Christian, as Dodd understood it, in his articulation of the Christian faith. It cannot be stressed too much that this cannot be labelled, with any accuracy, Platonic but ought to be labelled Incarnational.

A comparison of C.H. Dodd's and E.C. Hoskyns's understanding of Christianity as a historical religion as seen in their Johannine work.

This is a natural comparison. During much of the period that Hoskyns was wrestling with the problem of the meaning of history in a specifically Johannine context, Dodd, in a number of significant articles and books, was wrestling with implications of Christianity as a historical religion. It has been argued that Dodd's understanding influenced his Johannine work and that he found the essential solution classically expressed by the Fourth Evangelist. Moreover, the two scholars were together at Cambridge in this period and for part of the time Dodd was working out his position in conscious dialogue with Hoskyns. Whilst there are considerable differences between the two scholars, Dodd did not wish to differ radically from Hoskyns; "In saying this (criticising Hoskyns for not taking the problem of historicity seriously enough), however, I do not wish to depart from Hoskyns's solution of the theological-historical problem."<sup>(218)</sup> One contention of this comparison is that the differences are as fundamental as the similarities. Within this study W.F. Howard's review of Hoskyns's commentary will also be used in order to show how more than one British Johannine scholar reacted to Hoskyns's work. One major problem is that Hoskyns's work is fragmentary in that he died before it was completed. Although the major outlines of his position are clear, these will be supplemented by Davey's essay, composed from Hoskyns's notes and entitled "The Fourth Gospel and the problem of the meaning of history."<sup>(219)</sup> Hoskyns's position will be outlined and then the comparison attempted.

Hoskyns had been working out his position for some time; indeed



in chapter one it was suggested that his review of Bernard's commentary could well be understood in this way. For our present concern the crucial point may easily be summarised. As Bernard understood it "The Gospel is History and Interpretation; not history interpreted but history and interpretation...The weakness of the commentary is that it introduces into a Gospel which is all of a piece a distinction which destroys the unity of the whole and of each section."<sup>(220)</sup> Hoskyns argued that a whole generation of commentators went down the wrong road; "Brought up on the background of the last generation, we never escape from the problem of historicity. It haunts us always,"<sup>(221)</sup> but this is to evade the essential problems that the Fourth Evangelist confronts us with; "The author of the Fourth Gospel, with greater theological insight, presses upon his readers the far more important, far more disturbing problem of history itself and its meaning."<sup>(222)</sup> Indeed, this is the purpose of the Fourth Gospel. It is also the purpose of Hoskyns's commentary.

"The purpose of this commentary can now be defined. It must endeavour to hear and set forth the Meaning which the author of the Gospel has himself heard and seen in the concrete, historical life and death of Jesus of Nazareth, in His separate actions and His audible words. The purpose of this commentary is to barricade the roads which seek to solve the problem either by regarding this Meaning as an idea of the author or as something which itself belongs to the mere hearing or sight of an eyewitness, regarded as historian, for in that case his faith would not be merely irrelevant, but actually suspect, since the eyewitness who believed could not be accepted as an impartial eyewitness. The purpose of this commentary is also to barricade the roads which lead to a disentangling of history and interpretation. This triple barricade does not, however, originate in some perversity of the author of this commentary, but because these barricades have been erected by the original author of the book, the meaning of his book must remain closed to those who tear down the barricades which he has so carefully erected."<sup>(223)</sup>

Like Dodd, Hoskyns has found the epitome of his own understanding in the thought of the Fourth Evangelist. The position quoted above comes towards the end of the long introduction, encapsulating the position set out in the first paragraph;

"He (the author of the Fourth Gospel) insists with the whole power of his conviction that what he records is what actually and really occurred (my italics). His Gospel, like the others is a 'bodily' gospel. But, and this is the problem of the Fourth Gospel, the author has so presented the 'sensible' history of Jesus that his readers are confronted in that history, and precisely there, with what is beyond time and visible occurrence, with the veritable Word of God and with the veritable life of eternity. If this be so, it is illegitimate for us to suppose that we are interpreting the Gospel, if we for one moment think that we have solved the problem of the Fourth Gospel by maintaining either that the Evangelist has identified his idea with the Truth of God or his spiritual experience with the eternal life of the Spirit of God, or that he has simply equated what any observer might have seen or heard of Jesus with that which eye hath not seen nor ear heard of the glory of God. This would be to make of the problem of the Fourth Gospel a problem, whereas it is in truth the problem of all problems, for it is concerned with the relation between time and eternity, between what is finite and what is infinite, between phenomenon and reality, in fact between men and God. But the surprising factor is that the Problem of all problems is presented to us, forced upon us with the urgency of an ultimate demand, not by transferring us into the realms of speculative philosophy or even of spiritual experience, not by passing from a moral Jesus to a metaphysical Son of God... but by confronting us with the precise and bodily history of Jesus from whose 'belly' flowed rivers of living water, who came not by water only, but by water and blood, by whose blood men are saved

and whose flesh they must eat." (224)

There is here an insistence on the genuine historicity of the events described in the Fourth Gospel. Yet there is tension in Hoskyns's position, formally he agrees that the history of Jesus is where God is made known to men, yet on other occasions he does not seem at all concerned with the historical character of that revelation.

Before we probe this tension, a tension that Hoskyns does not recognise, we will set out the tension that Hoskyns does note. Observing that the rich eschatological language had all but disappeared from the Fourth Gospel, Hoskyns continued,

"And yet, the removal of the formal eschatological tension does not mean that all tension has been removed from the teaching of Jesus. It is not that the author of the Fourth Gospel, unlike the more primitive Christians, stood confronted, not by the end, but by centuries of Christian and non-Christian history rolling out in the distant perspective before his eyes, so that the urgent divine imperative has been inevitably weakened. The tension in the Fourth Gospel is, if such a thing were possible, even more acute. The Fourth Gospel describes an ultimate tension.....The tension between God and men. It vibrates and is set in motion at the point where trembling and arrogant human life is met by the Life that is eternal; at the point where men are confronted by Jesus, son of man and - son of God." (225)

Thus he concludes "The Fourth Gospel is less an Apostolic witness to history than an Apostolic witness to that which is beyond history, but which is, nevertheless, the meaning of the 'Jesus of history', and therefore the meaning of all history." (226) He concludes that the non-historical must not be dismissed as Johannine interpretation since "It is, rather, the veritable meaning of the history that has been set forth...The meaning of the history of Jesus preceded and conditions its occurrence." (227)

This being so, Hoskyns could not rest in the solutions offered by either

radical or conservative critics;

"Explain the 'But' which the Gospel sets against our solutions and which pulls away the cup just when it is at our lips, and we shall have solved the riddle of the book. The 'But' which we here encounter is, however, no 'sneaking, evasive, half-bred sort of conjunction' which the honest interpreter is able to remove; it is, rather, the expression in a literary document of the restlessness of human life; it is the 'But' of an author vibrating under the tension of the relation between God and man, a tension which he has encountered in the figure of Jesus of Nazareth and of which he cannot be rid. For this strictly theological tension can be resolved only in the resurrection, in the resting places which Jesus has prepared in His Father's house, in the advent of the Holy Spirit of God, who is the teacher of the final and ultimate Truth." (228)

This is very powerful writing, so powerful that on occasions essential positions are clouded in the sheer power of the words. It is 'dialectical', a word typical of the Barthianism of the nineteen-twenties by which Hoskyns was so influenced. For Hoskyns the Fourth Gospel is a theological work. As Barrett argues, Hoskyns and Davey have given classical expression to this truth. (229) Like Dodd, Hoskyns attempted to do justice to the unique character of the Incarnation. To use Dodd's words, "Thus the historical situation in which Christ lived and died is also the moment at which what is beyond history takes command of history and gives to it an ultimate or 'eschatological' character." (230)

This position appears to demand that as clear an attempt as possible be made to discover what were the actual events of the life of Jesus and as full an account as possible of the teaching of Jesus be set forth. Dodd saw that this was demanded by the Gospel itself; "The question of the relation between the Johannine presentation of the story of Jesus and what actually happened is raised not only by the notorious divergencies between John and the Synoptics, but by pronouncements of the Fourth Evangelist

himself; 'The word was made flesh': 'The flesh profiteth nothing'." (231)

At the conclusion of the long section on "The historical tension of the Fourth Gospel", Hoskyns offered this solution,

"The visible, historical Jesus is the place in history where it is demanded that men should believe, and where they can so easily disbelieve, but where, if they disbelieve, the concrete history is found to be altogether meaningless, and where, if they believe, the fragmentary story of His life is woven into one whole, manifesting the glory of God and the glory of men who have been made by Him. There is no escape from history possible for the author of the Fourth Gospel, just as there can be no historical materialism in the presence of Jesus. He says, and He means, that men must eat His flesh and drink His blood, that they must be brought into full relationship with His stark historicity. But this relationship has no meaning and remains unprofitable unless the Spirit be veritably encountered there, unless that precise life is met by the Life that is eternal. The Word became flesh - dangerous language when divorced from its context in the Fourth Gospel, for the author does not mean that the Spirit was turned into flesh and therefore becomes profitless, or that the Spirit or Word of God became a thing visible to the historical eye. He does mean, however, that the flesh of Jesus was the place where men did, and still do, believe and disbelieve; where the division between those who believe and those who do not believe becomes an ultimate division between the children of God and the children of the Devil. Any relative distinction between faith and unbelief is unthinkable." (232)

Yet what does Hoskyns mean by "Entering into a full relationship with His stark historicity"? Not a great deal, presumably, unless he is going to dismantle one of the barricades which he believes the author has set. To enter into a relationship with that 'stark historicity' must imply a dismantling of the barricade set against the separation of history and interpretation. Moreover, for the unbeliever, "The concrete history is altogether

meaningless." So in the last analysis the whole Gospel inexorably reinforces the major theme; the theme of "The non-historical that makes sense of history."<sup>(233)</sup>

If pressed at this point, Hoskyns's solution certainly leaves some questions unanswered; not least when he asks "How can non-historical truth be set forth save in non-historical terms?"<sup>(234)</sup> Arguing that if the "Flesh of Jesus, if His appearance on the field of history were exhausted in history",<sup>(235)</sup> the Jews were right and indeed the Gospel proclaimed by the Church a blasphemy, Hoskyns suggested that the evangelist wrote to rescue his readers from "So grave a misunderstanding of the Jesus of history"<sup>(236)</sup> by refusing to "Throw the Jesus of history to the winds"<sup>(237)</sup> but "By insisting that the tradition itself has a meaning peering out of it at every point, a meaning which is 'beyond history', and which alone makes sense of history."<sup>(238)</sup> He argued that the Fourth Evangelist has done this with a freedom which is "Nothing less than staggering to us who have been brought up within the strait fetters of the 'Historical Method', who have completely lost the sense for the Problem of Theology, which is to set forth the non-historical truth that underlines all history and which is almost apparent in the life and death of Jesus."<sup>(239)</sup> Why "almost apparent" What does Hoskyns imagine the Fourth Evangelist was trying to safeguard? It may well be that one of Hoskyns's pupils, C.E.B. Cranfield, also one who moves naturally within the Barthian theological tradition, although the later Barth seems to be his mentor more than early Barth whose works Hoskyns knew so well, has taken the argument a satisfactory step beyond his teacher. Cranfield writes of a messianic veiledness which seems to do justice both to Hoskyns's theological insight and also safeguards the event-character of the Incarnation;

"God's kingly intervention in the person, works and words of Jesus is a secret (musterion) in the sense that it can only be recognised by God-given faith (dedotai). This secret of the kingdom of God is the secret of Jesus' Messiahship and the secret of his divine

Sonship. God's self-revelation is indirect and veiled. (While the eye of faith sees through the veil and grasps the secret, for the unbeliever, so long as he remains an unbeliever, the veil is unpenetrated, and everything is still en parabolaïs.).....By this veiled revelation men are placed in a situation of crisis, a separation between faith and unbelief is brought about, and the blindness and sinfulness of men are shown up to what they are...The revelation is veiled for the sake of man's freedom to believe."(240)

As this position is developed throughout his commentary Cranfield shows great interest in the question of historicity and he does not find the Marcan tradition wanting here. Dodd also rightly questioned Hoskyns at this point; "When, therefore, we have acknowledged that the Fourth Gospel is concerned with the non-historical that makes sense of history, I do not see how we can be prevented from raising the question (answering it is another matter), what value is to be assigned to the record of facts of which sense is to be made?"(241) Yet Hoskyns argues that if we demand that an evangelist only narrates observable history, we are "Demanding of him that he should not be an evangelist."(242) Yet it appears that Hoskyns in his sheer exhilaration at being free from the problem of historicity never realised fully that the question of historicity is an important part of the investigation of the Gospels. To be frank, Hoskyns seems to have been enabled to avoid facing the question by a retreat into the dialectical.

Hoskyns apparently did not want to say that the Fourth Evangelist invented stories to be treated as allegories.(243) It is not surprising that this had to be emphasised for, to use Dodd's words, "He (Hoskyns) also insists that an occurrence must often be related in a form which is factually untrue, in order that its inherent meaning may be brought out."(244) Dodd and Howard probed this understanding in different areas. For Howard the whole problem climaxed in the narrative of the raising of Lazarus. Howard was unhappy with the treatment of both Hoskyns and Davey, the latter's discussion being what he believed was Hoskyns's position.

Howard noted that Hoskyns had argued that neither this miracle nor that of the healing of the man born blind "Are introduced as proofs of a doctrine or as symbolical illustrations of Christian mysticism; they constitute the revelation of the power of Jesus, and the truth is manifested in historical action." (my italics)<sup>(245)</sup> Howard also noted that Hoskyns had argued very differently in the case of chapter nine;

"The story of the blind man is not, therefore, the outcome of the desire to give concrete embodiment to the idea of Jesus as the Light of the World, but is rather the outcome of a very complicated and complete fusion into one narrative of the experience of conversion to Christianity, of controversy with the Jews which was caused by the success of the Christian mission, and of the traditional accounts of healing of blind men by Jesus."<sup>(246)</sup>

There is some tension between the position of Hoskyns in the last two quotations. In the 'complete fusion' of the latter, the question of historicity is obviously relegated to a comparatively unimportant place. It comes as no surprise to read;

"The raising of Lazarus is related as a sign that the hour has come when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. Like all the other acts of Jesus, it is a parable of His victory over the world (xvi.11), and of the consequent passing from death to life of those who believe in Him. The Fourth Evangelist here provides the theological framework in which it is possible for him to record, and for his readers to understand, the raising of Lazarus."<sup>(247)</sup>

This leaves the question of historicity unanswered and indeed not raised. Howard was correct in criticising Hoskyns at this point.<sup>(248)</sup> All this in spite of the fact that Hoskyns noted the Fourth Evangelist emphasised the historicity of the narrative.<sup>(249)</sup> Hoskyns knew that this narrative "Presents the historian with a very delicate problem."<sup>(250)</sup> Hoskyns was obviously very ill at ease in handling this problem; he suggested there



might be some connection with the Lucan parable of Dives and Lazarus<sup>(251)</sup> but he asserted that "The attention of the reader is not meant to rest upon a miracle once wrought by Jesus. The form of the record of the raising of Lazarus suggest the freedom that results from the mighty act of God by which the Christians have passed from death to life."<sup>(252)</sup>

Despite his knowledge that the Fourth Evangelist stresses the historical nature of the event, Hoskyns will not grapple with the question of historicity at this very point where it presses most strongly upon the reader of the Fourth Gospel.

Moreover, in probing the interpretation of the raising of Lazarus, Howard was following the path laid down in the commentary, for this miracle dominates the early part of Davey's essay. In this essay the question is asked, "Did Lazarus rise from the dead?"<sup>(253)</sup> Davey observed that,

"This is almost always the first question that is asked of anyone who lectures or writes about the Fourth Gospel. It is, moreover, essentially a right question (my italics), not merely because so much seems to stand or fall with the answer to it, but because the conscious purpose of the Fourth Evangelist seems to be to force his readers back upon the history - the flesh - of Jesus, in which, according to this account, the raising of Lazarus played so vital a part."<sup>(254)</sup>

This 'right question' is never answered; a two-page discussion ends just when one is expecting an answer with the assertion that "It is at this point that it is necessary to pass from the immediate consideration of the raising of Lazarus to the more fundamental and general problem of the relation between chronological history and the meaning of history as it is presented throughout the Fourth Gospel."<sup>(255)</sup>

This is to avoid altogether the problem of what is the chronological history. Dodd is correct in his assertion that "The problem of 'historicity' has a place of its own within the larger 'problem of history' (to use Hoskyns's expression)."<sup>(256)</sup> Moreover, the commentary itself, in places, forces one to the same position;

"It is now possible to summarise the attitude of the Fourth Evangelist to history. His Gospel is consciously created by his recognition of the supreme importance of the history of Jesus, which not only mediates all that is to known of God, (my italics) but, also, in so doing, confronts man with the last things of God now (italicized), in the history through which man is passing, and so relates the whole world in which he stands to God."<sup>(257)</sup>

There is no other conclusion than that Hoskyns has not been entirely consistent here. There is no doubt on the one hand that he realised that Christianity is a historical religion yet he was not prepared to consider the vital question of the historicity of the Christ-event, which as we have seen, "mediates all that is to be known of God." Does not this position demand that the historicity of the words and works of Jesus be established? Can there be, on these terms, any revelation if these are not historical events?. Is not Hoskyns asserting here the classical Doddian position that, "History is event plus meaning"? It may be that Hoskyns's inconsistency was partly caused by his great understanding of the eschatological nature of the history of Jesus, but even this demands a greater emphasis on the actual historical nature of the Life of Jesus;

"In Jesus the world is confronted by the End. This does not mean that the eschatology of the earlier tradition has been transmuted into an inner present mysticism; it means that the Evangelist judges the heart of Christian eschatology to lie less in the expectation of a second coming in the clouds of heaven than in the historical fact of Jesus, in His words and actions; there the final distinction is made between life and death."<sup>(258)</sup>

There is much here that echoes Dodd, but again Dodd has been the more consistent in seeing the implications of this for the problem of historicity, even if, as we have argued, his own reconstruction leaves much to be desired. As we have argued, Dodd clearly saw that Hoskyns's position depends

ultimately upon the unique character of the Incarnation and the confrontation of the world by God in Christ. For this to be a meaningful position there has to be a quest for the historical Jesus and some disentangling of the triple barricade. Thus Dodd was correct in arguing that some dismantling of the barricade is possible;

"Nor do I think that the Evangelist himself has made the 'barricade' quite as impassable as might appear. There are pericopae which Form-criticism can recognise as belonging to the strata of tradition represented in the Synoptic Gospels (such as the healings at Bethesda and Siloam). In such case we must surely say that the Evangelist is presenting us with 'raw material'. We are, of course, expected to read such narratives in the light of the Gospel as whole, and they then 'make sense' as they did not before; but the existence of such 'raw material' seems to be a fact of some importance." (259)

Although Dodd asserted that he did not dissent from Hoskyns's "Fundamental solution to the theological historical problem" (260), there are very significant differences between the two scholars. The most fundamental is the possibility of historical events as a medium (indeed the medium) for God's self revelation. It is notable that Dodd writes generally in terms of the supra-historical, with which the historical is intimately related, whereas Hoskyns writes of the non-historical. Moreover, whilst Dodd in his review of Hoskyns's commentary, frequently refers to the "problem of Historicity", I doubt whether he does so naturally. More naturally he would refer to the challenge or the possibilities of historicity. As we have argued, his primary instincts were those of the historian, and he believed that the Biblical records, once subjected to the historical method of study, yielded firm facts upon which our religion is based. In his enjoyment at being liberated from the "problem of historicity", Hoskyns never fairly faced the fact that his own position also depended upon some real factual base to the Christ-event. Dodd also criticised

Hoskyns for almost totally ignoring the Hellenistic background of the Gospel. Whilst we have argued that Dodd has over-estimated this, there is no doubt that Dodd has seen very clearly that in his assertion that "The Word became flesh" the Fourth Evangelist was offering a remarkably different valuation of history than that generally current in the Greek world at the time.<sup>(261)</sup> Of this Hoskyns is apparently unaware. For Dodd, as for the Fourth Evangelist, there is an authority of history, and with it the demand that the question of historicity be squarely faced. Much of Hoskyns's work seems to be designed to prevent this question being faced. In an answer that on other grounds would have appealed to Dodd, Hoskyns argued that.

"The test that we must in the end apply to the Fourth Gospel, the test by which the Fourth Gospel stands or falls, is whether the Marcan narrative becomes more intelligible after reading the Fourth Gospel, whether the Pauline Epistles become more transparent, or whether the material presented to us in the New Testament is breaking up into unrelated fragments. If the latter be really and finally the case, we must then go back and speak of Johannine and Pauline theology. Once again we should be compelled to speak of the simplicity of the synoptic gospels, of the complexity of Pauline ideas, and of the unhistorical mysticism of the Fourth Gospel."<sup>(262)</sup>

Dodd did applaud the centripetal approach of Hoskyns but in this case it certainly prevents the question of historicity being asked and indeed shows some of the dangers inherent in such an approach. It is the wrong test to apply if the problem of historicity is the question being discussed.

### The Authority of History.

Although, of the scholars discussed, Dodd seems to be the most consistent in his handling of this question, problems still remain. Dodd's own reconstruction is unsatisfactory. It also remains true that much of Dodd's work now seems so dated because, whereas rightly, much current Johannine scholarship is concerned with the quest for the historical Johannine community, Dodd ignored this, except for a few comments. None of the scholars discussed has a satisfactory understanding of the issues involved.

"If history and interpretation together form the meaning of revelation, then historicity does matter because the interpretation is mere fancy without it. What neither Dodd, nor Hoskyns, nor Bultmann seem able to express is that history and interpretation interact to produce a third category; that is, existential conviction, which itself becomes part of history with a life of its own. This reduces the necessity for the truth of the historical facts, as what one has now seen is what one puts into the pool of ongoing endeavour of apprehension."(263)

References - Chapter V.

1. Dodd, Authority, p.248.
2. Ibid.
3. F.W. Dillistone, C.H. Dodd Interpreter of the New Testament, p.130.
4. Dodd, History and the Gospel, p.19.
5. Ibid. p.36.
6. Dodd, The meaning of Paul for today, Swarthmore Press, 1920, all citations from the Fontana edition of 1958, p.98.
7. Dodd, History and the Gospel, p.15.
8. Dodd, Authority, p.ix.
9. Ibid. p.ixff.
10. Ibid. p.ix.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid. p.x.
14. Dodd, Revelation, p.448.
15. Ibid. p.447.
16. Dodd, History and the Gospel, p.37.
17. Dodd, Authority, p.232.
18. Ibid. p.xii.
19. Dodd, Thirty Years, p.12.
20. Dodd, Apostolic Preaching, p.204ff.
21. Dodd, Authority, p.xi.
22. Dodd, Revelation, p.446.
23. Ibid. p.447.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid. p.448.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid. p.449; for a similar discussion of the essential issues see History and the Gospel, pp.24-30.
29. Dodd, Background, p.343.

30. The words are Dodd's from H.T.F.G.
31. Dodd, Portrait, p.183.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid. p.184.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid. While Dodd acknowledged the differences between the portraits, he urged that these should not be overestimated. Whereas the Synoptics placed Jesus firmly in a Jewish context, John placed him in an Hellenistic context.
37. Ibid. p.185.
38. Ibid. p.186.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid. p.187.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid. p.188.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid. p.191f.
45. Ibid. p.192.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid. p.193.
49. Ibid. p.194.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid. The specific points of contact that Dodd saw were with Matthew 11.27= Luke 10.22 and Luke 22.42 of Matthew 26.42 and Mark 14.36.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid. p.194f.
54. Ibid. p.195.
55. Ibid. p.196.
56. A.J.B. Higgins, The Historicity of the Fourth Gospel, Lutterworth, 1960, p.63f.
57. Ibid. p.9f.

58. Dodd, Portrait, p.196.
59. Ibid. p.195.
60. Ibid. p.198. Dodd knew that both the Johannine and Synoptic traditions had been influenced by the environment in which they had been handed down. He hazarded a guess that "The synoptic evangelists here followed a tradition handed down in a milieu where the Church was most keenly aware that it was 'militant here on earth' and must always remember, the stringent conditions of the service, while the tradition followed by John came from a milieu in which the Church was most conscious of the profound significance of its own Koivwvia p.196.
61. W. Nicol, The Semeia in the Fourth Gospel: tradition and redaction, Leiden, 1972, p.6.
62. F.W. Beare, Review of H.T.F.G., N.T.S., 10, p.521f.
63. Ibid.
64. Dodd, Inaugural, p.32.
65. Dodd, Portrait, p.183.
66. Dodd, The Founder of Christianity, Collins, 1971; all citations from the Fontana edition of 1973. This book began as the Syr. D. Owen lectures for 1954 but "For various reasons publication has regrettably been delayed longer than was contemplated. In the interval the material of the lectures has been extensively reshaped and rewritten, though their broad pattern has been retained, and the proportion of added material is considerable", p.11. The original citation of Robinson was taken from p.7.
67. Ibid. p.8.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid.
70. J.A.T. Robinson, The Human Face of God, S.C.M., 1973, p.29.
71. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.8.
72. i.e. that Fourth Gospel is the last of the four, comes from Ephesus, is based upon a reliable tradition and the evangelist is using familiar Greek methods of presentation for a Greek audience.
73. Dodd, Founder, p.33, where he argued that "To assume that these gospels give us a complete and rounded picture of the teaching of Jesus on all its sides would perhaps be going too far. A different attitude is adopted in a work of which nothing has yet been said, the Gospel according to John".
74. Ibid. p.35.
75. Dodd, H.T.F.G., the specific examples cited are the parable of the grain of wheat and the parabolic saying about the wind.
76. Ibid.



77. Ibid.
78. Dodd, Founder, p.35.
79. Ibid. p.49.
80. Ibid.
81. Ibid. p.54f.
82. Dodd, Authority, p.236f.
83. cf H.T.F.G., p.8, where Dodd wrote "No doubt we must, in the long run, take responsibility for our judgements of historical probability, a responsibility which no serious historian can avoid, with all its risks of 'subjectivity'."
84. Dodd, Founder, p.56f.
85. Ibid. p.56.
86. Ibid. p.62.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid. p.62f.
89. Ibid. p.62.
90. Ibid, where he wrote "They (the sayings of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel) are the product of a singularly penetrating intelligence which has long brooded over his remembered words and actions".
91. Ibid.
92. Ibid. p.66.
93. Ibid. p.67.
94. Lindars, Commentary, loc cit.
95. Dodd, Founder, p.89.
96. Ibid. p.99.
97. Ibid.
98. Dodd, Interpretation, p.302.
99. Dodd, Founder, p.185.
100. cf Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.429ff.
101. Dodd, Interpretation, p.431.
102. Dodd, Founder, p.133.
103. Ibid. p.144 repeating the position in The Close.
104. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.428.
105. cf Dodd, Founder, p.139-42.

106. Dodd, Founder, p.157.
107. Ibid. p.159.
108. Ibid. p.163.
109. Ibid. p.162.
110. Ibid. p.167.
111. Ibid. p.170.
112. Dodd, Background, p.330.
113. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.432.
114. N. Perrin, Review of H.T.F.G., Journal of Religion, 44, 1964, p.335.  
It seems possible that Dodd's influence might have been just as significant in the N.E.B.'s translation of John 19.29 where a pre-disposition towards the historicity of the event is evident as too is Dodd's understanding of the nature of the Johannine Passion narrative. However, I have been assured by Professor Moule that this was not so.
115. Dodd, Interpretation, p.142f.
116. Dodd, Review of Bernard, p.371.
117. Bernard, Commentary, p.xc.
118. Ibid.
119. Dodd, Founder, p.43.
120. Ibid.
121. Dodd, Bible and Background, George Allen and Unwin, 1931, p.74f.  
This book had its origin in a series of broadcast talks in which Dodd had been asked to deal with the history of the Bible in an elementary way.
122. Dodd, History and the Gospel, p.110.
123. cf Founder, p.140.
124. Ibid. p.139.
125. Ibid. p.142.
126. See 115 above.
127. S.S. Smalley, John, p.208.
128. Dillistone, op cit p.94.
129. Dodd, Review of Cullman, Les Sacrements dans l'Evangile Johannique: La vie de Jesus et le culte de l'eglise primitive in J.E.H., 3, 1952, pp.218-21.
130. Dodd Eucharistic Symbolism; Expositor, 8th series, 11, (1911), pp.530-1
131. Dodd, Eschatological Element, Interpreter, 20, 1923-24, pp.14-24.

132. Dodd, Eucharist and Fellowship, Theology, 22, 1931, pp.33-36.
133. Dodd, Background, B.J.R.L., xix, 1935, pp.329-43.
134. Dodd, History and the Gospel, 1938.
135. Dodd, Prologue, in Studies in the Fourth Gospel, edited by F.L. Cross, Mowbrays, 1957.
136. Dodd, Parables, Nisbet, 1935, all quotations from the revised edition of 1936.
137. Dodd, Eucharist and Fellowship, p.336, repeating the argument put forward in Authority, p.259.
138. Ibid. p.335.
139. Ibid. p.334.
140. Ibid. p.334f.
141. Dodd, Parables, p.203, repeating the position in Eucharist and Fellowship, p.333, "The primitive Eucharistic traditions of the Church come down to us embedded in an eschatological context".
142. Ibid.
143. Dodd, Eucharist and Fellowship, p.334, but even here he goes far beyond its being a mere intellectual activity "That which we have seen and heard, that which our hands handled, we 'declare' in this Sacrament. Thus the Heilstatsachen are always contemporary facts to the consciousness of the Church".
144. Dodd, The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the N.T., in Christian Worship, edited by N. Micklem, 1936, p.76f. Again, this repeats the position in Parables, p.203, "The Church prays 'Thy Kingdom come'; 'Come Lord Jesus'. As it prays, it remembers that the Lord did come, and with Him came the Kingdom of God. Uniting memory with aspiration, it discovers that He comes. He comes in His Cross and Passion; He comes in the Glory of His Father with the holy angels. Each Communion is not a stage in a process by which His coming draws gradually nearer, or a milestone on the road by which we slowly approach the distant goal of the Kingdom of God on Earth. It is a reliving of the decisive moment at which He came.
145. Dodd, Parables, p.204; see also Prologue, p.13.
146. Dodd, History and the Gospel, p.162ff.
147. Dodd, The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the N.T., p.78f. see also Eucharist and Fellowship, p.333.
148. This the title of his study of the Fourth Gospel, published by John Knox Press in 1976.
149. Ibid. p.107.
150. Dodd, Review of Cullmann, p.218.
151. Ibid.
152. The description is Dodd's, Ibid.

153. Ibid.
154. Ibid.
155. Ibid. p.219.
156. Ibid. p.221; the two exceptions were Cullmann's discussion of chapter 9 and the discussion of John the Baptist and the Baptism of Jesus.
157. Dodd, Eucharistic Symbolism, p.530f.
158. cf Ibid, where Dodd wrote "He (the Fourth Evangelist) takes his start rather from existing ideas and institutions, and the interest lies in the way in which they are treated".
159. cf Ibid.
160. cf Ibid, where the contention is supported by accounts of pictures from the Cemetery of Priscilla and the Cemetery of Domitilla, both held to be from the second half of the first century and not later than the Fourth Gospel.
161. Ibid. p.533.
162. The words are Dodd's, Ibid.
163. Ibid. p.534.
164. Ibid.
165. Ibid. p.534f.
166. Ibid. p.533; see p.542 for an identical argument with respect to the vine.
167. Ibid. p.535; on p.536 this is described as "the mystic feeding on Christ".
168. Ibid. p.536f.
169. Ibid. p.543.
170. Ibid. p.543-5; Dodd argued that under the influence of Pauline teaching and that of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the sacrificial understanding of the Eucharist was dominant.
171. Ibid. p.545.
172. Ibid. p.546.
173. Ibid.
174. Dodd, History and the Gospel, p.163.
175. Ibid. p.162.
176. Dodd, Revelation, p.447.
177. R. Bultmann, Jesus and the Word; more strikingly put in The History of the Synoptic Tradition, (English edition) p.371, "The kerygma of Christ is a cultic legend and the Gospels are extended cult legends".

178. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, (English edition) volume 1, p.302.
179. R.Kysar, A comparison of the exegetical presuppositions and methods of C.H. Dodd and Rudolph Bultmann in the interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, unpublished thesis submitted to Northwestern University 1967.
180. Kysar, Thesis, p.220.
181. See 178 above.
182. See 174 above.
183. Kysar, Thesis, p.220.
184. Dodd, Revelation, p.447.
185. D.A. Aune, The cultic setting of realised eschatology in early Christianity, supplement to Novum Testamentum, 28, Leiden, 1972
186. Ibid. p.12; for Dodd's anticipation see particularly 144 above.
187. Ibid. p.129; Aune does not accept Dodd's understanding of the origin and purpose of the Fourth Gospel; he accepts the thesis of J.L. Martyn in History and theology in the Fourth Gospel.
188. Ibid. p.48.
189. Ibid. p.55.
190. Dodd, Interpretation, p.7.
191. Ibid. p.447.
192. Aune, op cit p.94.
193. Dodd, Background, p.336.
194. Dodd, The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the New Testament, p.79.
195. Dodd, Hellenism and Christianity, p.125f.
196. Ibid. p.126.
197. Dodd, Prologue, p.12.
198. C.K. Barrett, Commentary, II, S.P.C.K., 1978, p.35.
199. Dodd, Commentary, p.140.
200. Ibid.
201. Dodd, Prologue, p.12.
202. Dodd, Background, p.343.
203. Dodd, Prologue, p.15; cf Ibid. p.22, where he affirmed "The revelation of God's glory in the incarnate word is ...absolutely and finally real: it is also...finally and absolutely beneficent".

204. Ibid. p.15.
205. Kysar, Thesis, p.208.
206. Dodd, Eucharistic Symbolism, p.546.
207. Ibid.
208. Dodd, Prologue, p.10.
209. Dodd, Interpretation, p.277.
210. Ibid. p.283.
211. Ibid. p.284.
212. Dodd, Eschatological element, p.17f.
213. Ibid. p.18.
214. Ibid.
215. Ibid. p.22f.
216. Kysar, Thesis, p.59.
217. Ibid. p.426. Here, too, Dodd has found the epitome of his own understanding in the theology of the Fourth Evangelist.
218. Dodd, Review of Hoskyns, Theology, 41, 1940, pp.305-10; p.308.
219. Davey noted that his essay was composed of fragments left by Hoskyns; although he hoped it was consonant with the position of Hoskyns, Davey took final responsibility for the conclusions reached.
220. Hoskyns, Review of Bernard, p.169f.
221. Hoskyns, Commentary, all citations from the second revised edition, 1947, p.112.
222. Ibid. p.58.
223. Ibid. p.132.
224. Ibid. p.17f.
225. Ibid. p.61.
226. Ibid. p.66; cf also p.129f where Hoskyns writes "In other words, the theme of the Fourth Gospel is the non-historical that makes sense of time, God who makes sense of men and is therefore their saviour".
227. Ibid. p.130.
228. Ibid.
229. In the second edition of his commentary, p.97, Barrett observes "The Gospel is in the fullest sense of the term a theological work. John was concerned to confront his readers through Jesus with God".
230. Dodd, Review of Hoskyns, p.308.

231. Ibid.
232. Hoskyns, Commentary, p.85; see also p.83f, "Spirit or History; this was the dilemma. Spirit or flesh; these were the alternatives. But the author of the Fourth Gospel saw the matter wholly otherwise. Flesh, history, aye, the flesh and blood of Jesus, profiteth nothing if it be mere observable history, if it be that which was seen by the Pharisees, who were also eyewitnesses, if it be that which was seen by Pilate and by those who neither believed nor knew...If the flesh of Jesus, if His appearance on the field of history, were exhausted in history and were to be understood as information to be collected together, the Jews were right, and the claims He made for Himself were no more than self-made claims".
233. Ibid. p.129.
234. Ibid. p.84.
235. Ibid.
236. Ibid.
237. Ibid.
238. Ibid.
239. Ibid.
240. C.E.B. Cranfield, The Gospel according to St. Mark, C.U.P., 1959, p.157f, this understanding is characteristic of the whole commentary.
241. Dodd, Review of Hoskyns, p.309.
242. Hoskyns, Commentary, p.84.
243. cf Ibid. p.117, where Hoskyns argued "Yet it must once more be most emphatically stated that the argument by which this examination has been approached is in no sense intended to justify the invention of 'historical material' as a necessary means of expressing theological 'truths'".
244. Dodd, Review of Hoskyns, p.309.
245. Hoskyns, Commentary, p.395.
246. Ibid. p.362; interestingly this is not very far from the position suggested by Dodd in Interpretation, p.357.
247. W.F. Howard, Review of The Fourth Gospel by Hoskyns and Davey, J.T.S., 42/43, 1941 and 1942, p.78.
248. cf Ibid., where Howard wrote "All this is profoundly true, but we are left with an uneasy feeling that the writer of this commentary has concealed with a cloud of words his judgement on the historical question, and that he does not offer a solution". On p.76 he commented "The literary style varies greatly. Sometimes Hoskyns writes in an involved and laboured style....At other times (Having noticed a sentence which sprawled for seventeen lines) the author is terse, sententious and even oracular".

249. of Hoskyns, Commentary, p.395, "In spite of the author's emphasis on historicity, the narrative of the raising of Lazarus presents the historian with a very delicate problem".
250. Ibid.
251. of Ibid. p.397, "It must be remembered that it is possible that the Lucan parable may have been evoked by some historical event that provided the author of the Fourth Gospel with the material out of which he constructed his narrative".
252. Ibid. p.407.
253. Ibid. p.109.
254. Ibid.
255. Ibid. p.112.
256. Dodd, Review of Hoskyns, p.310.
257. Hoskyns, Commentary, p.126.
258. Ibid. p.268.
259. Dodd, Review of Hoskyns, p.310.
260. Ibid.
261. of Ibid. p.307 where Dodd suggested "John clearly has in view the problems and needs to which that literature (the Hermetica) bears witness. The answer which he supplies is all the more strongly contrasted with all non-Christian answers because it is given so largely in language which already had religious associations outside Christianity. 'The Word was made flesh': the 'scandalous' character of that statement (to use a favourite expression of Hoskyns) is never so emphatic as when it is read after a study of some of the purest religious teaching which has come down to us from the non-Christian world of that time. The difference turns largely upon the valuation of history, which for all thought of a gnostic type is an irrelevant hindrance to our knowledge of God".
262. Hoskyns, Commentary, p.133f.
263. I owe this form of words to Professor Lindars in discussion of an earlier draft of this chapter.



## Chapter VI.

### Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel.

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Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel.

Hailed by G.B. Caird and J.A.T. Robinson as Dodd's greatest book yet, "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" was published in 1963.<sup>(1)</sup>

In this chapter this book will be examined in its relationship to the specific Doddian context in which it emerged, in the context of the 'New look' at the Fourth Gospel and in the light of contemporary reviews

It is necessary at the outset to realise that Dodd's aim in this book is modest. This is not to criticise the aim, but to state it, since a good many of those who have so enthusiastically embraced the 'new look', have tended to see in the book what is not there. In Dodd's words,

"In the ensuing investigation we are not asking, in the first place, whether this or that statement in the Fourth Gospel is likely to be historically correct, or more or less correct, than such another statement in Mark or Luke; not, in the first place, whether the Johannine picture as a whole is more or less probable than that of the Synoptics. No doubt we must, in the long run, take responsibility for our judgements of historical probability, a responsibility which no serious historian can avoid, with all the risks of 'subjectivity'; but there is here much useful investigation of a more 'objective' kind that can be done before we come to that."<sup>(2)</sup>

The investigation is continuous with Dodd's studies going back as far as 1921, "The Close of the Galilaean Ministry". The book itself had its origins in the Sarum lectures of 1954-55; between these years and 1963 there is a specific Doddian context provided by a series of important articles. Before this, there was the unsatisfactory appendix in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" and in 1952, in "According to the Scriptures", the demonstration that the Fourth Evangelist had access to a tradition with a use of testimonies independent of the Synoptics. His testimonies were drawn from the pre-canonical tradition and the Fourth

Gospel merits serious attention as an entrance to that tradition. In embryo here, then, is the essential Doddian thesis, but Dodd was at work on the investigation before this. In one sense the book can be traced back to 1938, when, in "History and the Gospel" he announced his intention of examining P. Gardner-Smith's thesis set forth in "St. John and the Synoptic Gospels", 1938. In his last year as chairman of the Cambridge New Testament Seminar, Dodd presented to that body a number of issues which were dealt with in "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel".<sup>(3)</sup> So there is a period of twenty-five years in which Dodd was specifically concerned with this investigation, one which reflects a long-held conviction.<sup>(4)</sup>

The Doddian context 1954-63.

In 1954, Dodd published "The Dialogue Form in the Gospels".<sup>(5)</sup> In the opening paragraph of that lecture he described the form critic as one who is concerned to establish the character of the tradition at the earliest date at which we have access to it. He is not primarily concerned with the factual truth of the record.<sup>(6)</sup> This is exactly the stance that is also adopted in "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel". He was convinced that this preliminary task was of considerable importance to the historian.

In the lecture, Dodd argued for the recognition of colloquy or dialogue as a form. In one sense this was nothing new, as Dodd acknowledged, for M. Albrecht discussed a group of colloquies, which were concerned with the controversy between Jesus and his opponents, in his "Die Synoptischen Streitgespräche", 1921. Dodd suggested that Albrecht had not gone far enough. If he had been successful in identifying one type of controversy, he was wrong in omitting all those where there were signs of genuine dialogue. Dodd identified a good number in the Synoptic Gospels, in which "There is genuine development of a theme through the controversial dialogue between the interlocutors."<sup>(7)</sup> Among the examples

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given are the Tribute Money of Mark 12.13-17 and the dialogue with the man of great possessions in Mark 10.17-27. Dodd suggested that the actual historical setting for these was the Ministry of Jesus. Dodd observed that in the Fourth Gospel "The use of dialogue is even more ubiquitous than in the Synoptics, and on a far more elaborate scale. Dialogue is employed, as in the Synoptics, to exhibit the teaching of Jesus, to bring out its meaning, and to illustrate it by way of contrast with other views."<sup>(8)</sup> There is, then, a broad similarity but an analysis of typical Johannine dialogues demonstrates a sharp contrast in form between these and those in the Synoptics.<sup>(9)</sup> In the Fourth Gospel the dialogue is initiated by Jesus. The interlocutor demonstrates either blank incomprehension or crude misunderstanding and his only positive contribution is by way of Johannine irony. Dodd maintained that the problem is to account for this difference in form. The problem cannot be solved by arguing that "Whereas the Synoptics preserve many of the traits of oral tradition, the Fourth Gospel is a highly literary work."<sup>(10)</sup> He did not, of course, deny that the Fourth Gospel is such a work, but went on to suggest the Fourth Gospel shows signs of the character of oral tradition in other forms. The example he gave was of aphorisms and sequences of aphorisms. Moreover, Dodd asserted that "The typical Johannine dialogue could not have been derived by any amount of merely literary manipulation from the Synoptic model. Their formative principles and motives are different."<sup>(11)</sup> Dodd found these in the Hellenistic world, and specifically in the Hermetic literature; "It seems, then, that the evangelist has moulded his material into forms based upon current models of philosophical and religious teaching, instead of following the forms represented in the Synoptic Gospels."<sup>(12)</sup> Dodd found here, additional support for his understanding of the Fourth Evangelist as the 'Master Propagator' of Christianity to the Hellenistic world.

Whence did the Evangelist derive the material that he so moulded? This has been discussed earlier and we need just repeat the conclusion that the Fourth Evangelist "Had at his disposal a still fluid tradition,

not yet crystallised into fixed forms, which he could deal with as he chose."<sup>(13)</sup> This is one of the metaphors descriptive of the tradition that is to play a significant part in "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel." The one example that Dodd gave in this lecture was a comparison of Mark 8.11-21 and two Johannine passages in which there is a demand for a sign, chapter two, with references to the destruction and raising of the Temple and chapter six with reference to the death and exaltation of Christ in verses 51 and 62. Following the method that he was to use extensively in "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel", Dodd denied any dependence on Mark and Matthew;

"I cannot bring myself to believe that the evangelist had before him the passages in Mark and Matthew, and carefully unpicked them in order to weave the material into a different fabric. Yet it is clear that he was working on material which the others also had. The most probable conclusion, as it seems to me, is that all three evangelists (or, if you will, their immediate sources) had before them a fluid unformed tradition in which the reminiscences and reflections were already mingled, and that each formulated the material after his own fashion."<sup>(14)</sup>

Here, in embryo, is the Doddian thesis. If we accept the thesis that the Evangelist is following a design current in Hellenistic religious circles, we are encouraged to seek for "Elements of tradition which he was incorporating in these alien forms."<sup>(15)</sup> Where comparison is possible with the tradition known to us through the Synoptics we can be sure of the identification, but there is also the possibility that "The still fluid tradition of the teaching of Jesus known to John included also material of which the Synoptic evangelists have taken no account, but which is of such a kind that it can be integrated with the Synoptic tradition."<sup>(16)</sup> Here, too, is the implicit understanding of the superiority of the Synoptic Gospels in terms of the preservation and presentation of the tradition.

Dodd was no innovator in this area. There is, for example, the list

of Aphoristic sayings compiled by Drummond<sup>(17)</sup> and Howard's appendix on "The Style and Structure of the Teaching of Jesus" in which the material for such a discussion was set out at some length,<sup>(18)</sup> but Dodd's article was significant, reflecting both the critical mood of the times and the way in which his own work would develop.

In 1955 Dodd published "Some Johannine 'Herrenworte' with parallels in the Synoptic Gospels".<sup>(19)</sup> With minor alterations this was incorporated in "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel." In this article Dodd examined four Dominical sayings which have parallels in the Synoptics and asked "Whether, if there is no general presumption of literary indebtedness, the phenomena are such as to suggest indebtedness, or whether they rather point to independent use of common oral tradition."<sup>(20)</sup> This was a significant study; John 13.16, 12.25, 13.20 and 20.23 are compared exhaustively with their parallels in the Synoptic tradition and in no instance can a case be made out for literary dependence. To prove literary dependence "Some specific evidence is required - some striking or unexpected identity of language, for example, or some agreement in an apparently arbitrary arrangement of material."<sup>(21)</sup>

Whilst we cannot work through the examples here, in each case the most probable explanation of the evidence is that the Fourth Gospel is not dependent on the Synoptics. To cite the conclusion of the first comparison, which is typical of a well argued article,

.....there is no convincing reason to be discovered in the known tendencies of this author for the alteration he must have made if John 13.16 depends on Matthew 10.24-25.....On the other hand, not only the differences between Matthew and Luke, and perhaps even the variant readings in Matthew, might be accounted for if we assumed that this saying circulated orally in variant forms, and that the parallelism of slave-master, apostle-sender on the one hand, and that of disciple-teacher, slave-master on the other, was established at a primitive stage of tradition, while a third and simpler form

of the oral tradition to the effect, 'A disciple is not superior to his teacher; at best he may be like his teacher', was taken up by Luke and may possibly have influenced the shorter text of Matthew."<sup>(22)</sup>

Dodd, in his discussion of John 12.25, argued that "This very fundamental saying had a place in many separate branches of oral tradition."<sup>(23)</sup> This may have been caused by varying attempts to translate the original Aramaic. Dodd here, however, ventured a rare value judgement; "If we were permitted to speculate which of the Gospels preserves a form nearest to the common original, I believe John would be a good guess; but such speculation must always remain inconclusive."<sup>(24)</sup> What is significant here is, that this is the beginning of many value judgements in favour of the authenticity of the Johannine tradition and its value in the reconstruction of the life and teaching of Jesus that were to characterise the later Dodd.

At the end of this exhaustive discussion, Dodd had no hesitation in concluding with regard to these four sayings that "John is to be regarded as transmitting independently a special form of the common oral tradition, and not as dependent upon the Synoptic Gospels."<sup>(25)</sup> The conclusion is significant not simply because it is well argued, but because he reversed an opinion that he had previously held. What also emerges from this article is Dodd's insistence on oral tradition and he argued that the early church was not the bookish community that much nineteenth century (and indeed some twentieth century) scholarship insisted. Dodd never discussed the difference, if any, this would make to his understanding of tradition. Maybe the oral nature of the tradition allows for the fluidity that seems to be a part of his understanding, although he did allow, right at the end of "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel", that there might have been written aide-mémoires."<sup>(26)</sup> It is difficult to account for Dodd's dislike of written sources as such. It was as though he was unable to conceive of them other than as finished products within the canon, or that it was simply a reaction against much literary source criticism of the Fourth Gospel.

An equally serious omission was the absence of any discussion of Scandinavian work on the nature of the tradition in its oral form.<sup>(27)</sup> In this understanding the oral form is so 'fixed' that in all essentials an oral tradition functions as a written one insofar as the fluidity of the tradition is concerned.

1955 also saw the publication of "The appearance of the risen Christ; an essay in form criticism of the Gospels."<sup>(28)</sup> In this article Dodd suggested that we might accept the form critics' distinction between the 'concise' and the 'circumstantial' type of narrative. This distinction will serve for a discussion of the post-resurrection narratives. For our present concern we note that Dodd argued that the 'concise' narratives "Reflect directly the corporate tradition of the primitive Church"<sup>(29)</sup> whereas the 'circumstantial' allow more scope to the individual writer. In his discussion of pericopae which have often been thought to be misplaced post-resurrection narratives - although none has sufficient formal similarities for the case to be sustained - Dodd considered John 6.16-21 and Mark 6.41.51. He also considered the possibility that this could be one such misplaced post-resurrection narrative, but it would be difficult to argue for this from the Marcan form. This has consequences for our present concern;

"If we are to assume that Mark represents the earlier stage of this narrative, we should be disposed to infer that John has assimilated it to the form of the post-resurrection narratives. But does Mark, necessarily, in every case represent a more primitive stage of the tradition than John? I doubt it. There are in this case some grounds (which I will not discuss here) for believing that John is following an independent tradition which is in some respects more original than Mark's."<sup>(30)</sup>

He maintained that in both Gospels "The incident is firmly welded into its context, more firmly, indeed, than most of the pericopae belonging to the Galilaean Ministry."<sup>(31)</sup> Finally, in our present context, Dodd argued that,

"Formally, there is nothing to distinguish the narratives we have



been examining from the 'Paradigms' and other concise narratives on the one hand, and the 'Novellen', or 'Tales', on the other, which occur in other parts of the gospels, and they merit the same degree of critical consideration not only in their respect as witnesses to the faith of the early Church, but also as ostensible records of things that happened."<sup>(32)</sup>

Here again is Dodd's interest in the factual nature of the tradition and also the recognition that that tradition has a perspective.

The most significant of these articles was "A l'arrière-plan d'un dialogue Johannine" published in 1957.<sup>(33)</sup> This built upon his previous study, "The Dialogue form in the Gospels", by repeating that the Johannine dialogue is built upon Hellenistic models,<sup>(34)</sup> yet within a few years P. Borgen was to analyse a Johannine Discourse, 6.31-58, and to conclude that John's method is based on the homily pattern known to both the Palestinian Midrashim and Philo.<sup>(35)</sup> This comparison is important in view of Dodd's purpose in this study; "Granted that the literary form of these dialogues is the original work of the Fourth Evangelist, how far do their character and contents point to any known situation in the early Church as providing their background or 'Sitz im Leben', and how far are they related to the contents of the other parts of the gospel tradition."<sup>(36)</sup> This discussion had a bearing upon the wider problem of the value of the Fourth Gospel as a source of historical information for this dialogue is "One of the most powerful and carefully composed in the Fourth Gospel."<sup>(37)</sup>

Dodd knew that many scholars saw in this dialogue a reflection of the bitter relationships between Church and Synagogue at the end of the first century. He was not convinced by this argument because, in the first part of the dialogue, verses 31-47, "A group of Jews who have been described as 'Believers', are accused of attempted murder and roundly denounced as children of the devil."<sup>(38)</sup> If the dialogue reflects the situation at the end of the first century, why should the Synagogue be represented by 'believing' Jews? As the analysis proceeds by way of

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discussing the background and meaning of οἱ πεπιστευκότες αὐτῷ Ἰουδαῖοι it is argued, by a comparison with the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Galatians, that Jesus is addressing Judaising believers, those who are not simply Jewish by origin but who "Also take what we may call a Jewish-national standpoint."<sup>(39)</sup> He suggested that this is how the readers of the Fourth Gospel "Aquainted with the situation in the Church of their time"<sup>(40)</sup> would understand the 'believing Jews' of John 8.30-31. In Ephesus at the turn of the century! Thus like Paul, John is found to be involved in the Judaising controversy;

"If therefore we enquire for the 'Sitz im Leben', or historical situation within which this dialogue may have taken form, a reasonable hypothesis would be that it goes back to the struggle waged throughout the latter half of the first century in defence of the supra-national character of the Church against those who sought to maintain within it the traditional privilege of the Jews."<sup>(41)</sup>

Dodd sought to underline this argument by maintaining that the three points on which the dialogue turned - 1) liberty and servitude, 2) descent from Abraham and 3) sonship to God - were also used by Paul in Galatians. The treatment in each case is different - "The difference of treatment, however, is not less marked than the community of theme,"<sup>(42)</sup> - and in this particular case, as Dodd observed, "John is not 'deutero-Pauline'."<sup>(43)</sup>

Once the Sitz im Leben has been discovered we can see

"The genius of the Fourth Evangelist (who) has lifted the whole argument (especially in the closing verses, 42-47, where the characteristic marks of his authorship are strongest) to a level where its local and temporary aspects recede, and the issues are universal and radical: truth and reality, the death-desire that spring from the lie and bring incapacity to hear the Word, and, finally, a man's ultimate relation to God."<sup>(44)</sup>

It is possible that here Dodd has confused the situation in which the Johannine tradition was being formed or moulded with a different situation when

the Fourth Gospel was published. The period of the development of that tradition might conceivably be coterminous with that of the Judaising controversy whereas the period of the publication of the Fourth Gospel is not. To this we return later.

For our present concern, there is more to this article. Dodd asked "Do we not catch here the echoes of an earlier tradition?"<sup>(45)</sup> This tradition may be seen in Matthew 7.21 and more clearly in Matthew 3.7-10 and Luke 3.7-9, which is part of the Baptist's preaching. It is here that "We have....a very simple statement of the position which underlies the subtle and elaborate argument of John 8.31-47."<sup>(46)</sup> Dodd was not over concerned by the fact that these words were attributed to the Baptist; "....it seems clear that the primitive Church tradition preserved sayings of the Baptist as an integral part of its tradition along with the sayings of Jesus."<sup>(47)</sup> He maintained that the distinction between these two classes of saying was not always strictly maintained and, in any event, there are sayings of Jesus which reflect the standpoint of the Baptist.<sup>(48)</sup>

Thus, whilst the immediate Sitz im Leben is the Judaistic controversy of the early Church, in fact the ideas of this dialogue go back to the earliest stratum of the Gospel tradition; "Here and, I believe, elsewhere the Fourth Evangelist has reached back to the primitive testimony, by-passing in large measure the theological development associated with the name of Paul, to find a solid basis for his own theological interpretation of the Gospel."<sup>(49)</sup>

Pertinent questions remain to be asked of Dodd's position. There seems to be a tension between the picture of the Evangelist as Dodd classically understood him - and it is implied in parts of this article - and the picture of the Evangelist as one involved in the Judaising controversy. Dodd seems to have realised this, for in a footnote he argued that the Judaising controversy might have gone on longer than is generally thought and also that the Johannine dialogues may have developed over a period of years before they found their place in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>(50)</sup> Dodd never

returned to discuss this situation, and his work is the poorer as a result and again suggests that he could not change his picture of the Evangelist nor embark upon the quest for the historical Johannine community that some of his work suggested was the next move. Dodd knew that John's situation was not Paul's;

"It is to be noted in the first place that the questions which are extremely prominent in Paul are not mentioned in John, notably those of circumcision and of the continuing obligation of the Mosaic Law. The sole question is whether the Jewish Christians are or are not loyal to the teaching of Christ....It may be that by the time, or in the circle, in which John wrote, these questions were no longer alive, or it may be that he considered them merely consequential and not fundamental issues. In any case he does not stand here on the Pauline ground."<sup>(51)</sup>

It is indeed hard to conceive of the Fourth Gospel as born in the period of the Judaizing controversy for in the whole of that period a lapse into Judaism was possible for the Christian, whereas in the Fourth Gospel Judaism is no longer an option for the believer. The weakness of Dodd's method here is similar to that determination to recover the Johannine tradition where it has Synoptic counterparts. John's ecclesiastical situation can only be recovered, it seems, where it is held to coincide with what we know of the ecclesiastical situation from the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline Epistles. Although it is strictly outside the scope of this study, it is worth just mentioning the sort of analysis of the Johannine ecclesiastical situation that has been undertaken by so responsible a scholar as R.E. Brown.<sup>(52)</sup> Dodd could not undertake this study because of his understanding of the Fourth Evangelist as the 'Master Propagator' of Christianity to the Hellenistic world and it is significant that he saw the genius of the Fourth Evangelist most clearly in his raising of local issues to universal issues.

Serious criticisms from a slightly different angle were made by

J.A.T. Robinson in "The destination and purpose of St. John's Gospel".<sup>(53)</sup>

He argued "In the Judaizing controversy the crucial question was 'Who is the true Christian? (Need he observe the whole Law to qualify?) In the Johannine controversy the question is rather 'Who is the true Jew? (Is sonship of Abraham automatic by race?)"<sup>(54)</sup> Robinson found the Pauline

parallels to the Johannine dialogue in Romans 2.17-29 (Who is the true Jew?) and Romans 4.9-22 (Who is the true son of Abraham?) and in each case Paul is addressing Jews not Judaizers. He suggested "All the controversies in the Fourth Gospel take place within the body of Judaism.

The issues raised by the Judaizers are essentially frontier (italicized) problems - of whether in a frontier situation like that of Antioch one lived as a Jew or as a Gentile. But John is not faced with this problem".<sup>(55)</sup>

One does not have to accept Robinson's conclusions about the destination and purpose of the Fourth Gospel for his criticism of Dodd's position to remain pertinent. The Pauline passages that he provides are at least as natural as those suggested by Dodd and the essentially Jewish context is more satisfactory than the double Sitz im Leben suggested by Dodd. There does seem to be here, and elsewhere in his writings, a strange antinomy between Dodd's understanding of the origins of the Johannine tradition (or the initial stages in the composition of the Johannine dialogues) which look in a Jewish rather than a Hellenistic direction and its ultimate publication in a work directed very much towards the Hellenistic world.

Whatever criticisms might be made of Dodd's arguments here, this was a very significant article, very much reflecting his work at this period. It is, perhaps, worth wondering whether Dodd, a pacifist, could have found polemical intent in the Gospel. He can write of alien elements being mastered but it does appear that anything that might be considered polemical is ultimately raised by the Fourth Evangelist to that position where it naturally reflects the ultimate relation of man to God.

In 1962, Dodd published "Une parabole cachée dans le quatrième Évangile"<sup>(56)</sup> In fact this parable was discovered after the chapter on Parabolic Forms in "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" had been written. In finding parables in the Fourth Gospel, Dodd retracted arguments that he had previously held, most recently in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel". In "The Parables of the Kingdom", 1935, there are few references to the Fourth Gospel, and none of these suggests the possibility of finding parables in the Fourth Gospel, while in "The Gospel Parables", 1932 there is not a single reference to the Fourth Gospel. Whilst too much must not be made of this, it indicates that at periods in his career Dodd was very much a 'child of his times' so far as the Fourth Gospel was concerned. By the time he had completed this article, Dodd noted that Bultmann had seen three parables in the Gospel and that Robinson had argued that in 10.1-5 there are two parables of Synoptic type partly fused and partly confused.<sup>(57)</sup> Dodd found the parable of The Apprenticed Son in 5.19-30 which is one of the best argued and composed Johannine pieces. The parable may be found in verses 19-20a. "The background of the picture is to be sought in a society in which crafts are hereditary, the techniques being handed down from father to son."<sup>(58)</sup> Dodd demonstrated how the image of the 'Apprenticed Son' could be found extensively in the literature of the period. From 20b the elements of the picture are allegorised so that the father and son of the parable become God the Father and Christ, the son.

This parable, in terms of content, falls into the class of parables known to us in the Synoptics. Moreover, "Its form has synoptic analogues";<sup>(59)</sup> these are in terms of negation, affirmation and explanation and the parallel with Luke 8.16 and Matthew 5.15 is provided along with other partial parallels. Dodd concluded that this parable was drawn from the general reservoir of primary tradition. Dodd was inclined to go further than this; "If it is true that Jesus was himself both ΤΕΚΤΩΝ and ΤΕΚΤΟΝΟΣ υἱός, then it is hardly too bold a conjecture that we may have here an echo of his own words, recalling memories of his youth when he learnt his trade in the

family workshop at Nazareth."<sup>(60)</sup> Here, implicitly, is Dodd's unwitting testimony to his belief in the historical value of the Christian tradition. Of course, it may be so but Dodd had himself demonstrated that the picture of The Apprenticed Son was a common one. As we have seen, in the closing stages of his career, Dodd came to value this particular parable very highly. It is difficult to see why this should be so; it might perhaps be because the image is a commonplace in the ancient world, or because the parable was found embedded in a great Christological section or perhaps most significantly because of that leap of conjecture that has enabled Dodd to treasure here memories of Christ in the workshop in Galilee.

In the same year Dodd published "The Prophecy of Caiaphas: John 11.47-53".<sup>(61)</sup> Here too, we are confronted by a passage which claims to be historical, yet has theological content, and stands at a pivotal point within the Gospel;

"It not only establishes the fact that Jesus is to die, but it also states the purpose of his dying: he dies 'to gather into one of the scattered children of God'. Similarly in 12.32 by dying Christ will draw all men to himself, and in 10.15-16 (by clear implication if not totidem verbis) he dies to bring in his other sheep, not of this (the Jewish) fold, so that there may be one flock as there is one shepherd. Our pericope, therefore, brings us near to the centre of Johannine theology. We are in the presence of one of the most characteristic and distinctive ideas of the evangelist, without precise parallel elsewhere in the New Testament."<sup>(62)</sup>

Dodd maintained that "The words in which the idea is expressed, *ὅνα καὶ τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ ... συναγαγῇ εἰς ἓν* (52) , are introduced as a corollary to a proposition which is very far from suggesting any such idea: *ἔμελλεν Ἰησοῦς ἀποθνήσκειν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἔθνους* ."<sup>(63)</sup> He continued by suggesting that "The transitional phrase, *οὐχ ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἔθνους μόνου*, is obviously designed to give the desired turn - a quite arbitrary turn - to a maxim which is itself not congenial to this evangelist."<sup>(64)</sup> Dodd, then, argued

that the Evangelist received this pericope of Caiaphas from a source and turned it to his own use by the addition of the transitional phrase and verse 52.

Dodd asked whether it was possible to recover the source. Arguing that we must examine this passage as it ended at verse 51 before John took it over, Dodd suggested that in terms of structure or pattern it resembled a 'pronouncement story', using Taylor's label since it "Is descriptive, comprehensive and begs no questions."<sup>(65)</sup> This passage is unique in that the culminating saying is not uttered by Jesus. Thus, while the passage has the form of a pronouncement saying familiar in the Synoptics, it is nonetheless alien to that tradition. Dodd went on to ask "Then is there any evidence to suggest that the Fourth Evangelist worked with a tradition which, while broadly similar in formation, did not adhere so rigidly to the canon which appears to have governed the formation of the Synoptic tradition, viz, that at all times Jesus should be clearly portrayed in speech or in action?"<sup>(66)</sup> Dodd demonstrated that there are passages in the Fourth Gospel in which Jesus does not appear in person, but there is little similarity with the compact unit of narrative that is to be found in 11.47-53.<sup>(67)</sup> Finally Dodd considered 3.25-30 which also has some points of contact with the traditional pronouncement story in that the scene is briefly set, a short dialogue follows which leads up to the parable of verse 29 which is itself interpreted in the pregnant saying of the next verse. Whilst there is some Johannine elaboration here, Dodd affirmed "This might well be accepted as a not impossible unit of tradition of typical form."<sup>(68)</sup> Then in this instance the pregnant saying is attributed to the Baptist. This recalls the situation in "Behind a Johannine dialogue" where John was working with a tradition which attributed the saying to Jesus and the Synoptics with one that attributed it to the Baptist.

This is no real parallel to the situation in 11.47-52 where the significant saying is attributed to an enemy of Jesus. Despite this, Dodd was sufficiently impressed by its affinity in form with the tradition that he was encouraged to seek a possible milieu in which it took shape. The



passage culminates in the pronouncement "That it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation should perish". As Dodd saw, "It is in form a general maxim: the sacrifice of an individual is never too high a price to pay for national security."<sup>(69)</sup> This is given precise application in terms of Jesus dying for the nation, the qualifying phrase being the Evangelist's. Dodd found the milieu;

"The death of Jesus is regarded as the means by which the Jewish nation may be saved from disaster; it is a *λυτρον* for Israel. It is the same conception that underlies Mark 10.45, only treated in a purely secular spirit, and looked at from the opposite side: In Mark the *λυτρον* is willingly offered, in the pronouncement of Caiaphas it is exacted by means of judicial murder; whereas in Mark it is (vaguely) *ἀντὶ πολλῶν*, in John it is precisely *ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἔθνους*."<sup>(70)</sup>

Dodd was sure that this *λυτρον* -concept of the death of Jesus can only have arisen in "A Jewish Christian circle still acutely conscious of its solidarity with the 'commonwealth of Israel' as a whole."<sup>(71)</sup> This conclusion was supported by the High priest's being understood as a prophet;

"A Christian circle it must have been, in which a saying which could be taken as expressing the interpretation of the death of Jesus as *λυτρον* was welcome. Equally clear it was Jewish, for such a valuation of the office of high priest, even when its occupant was unworthy, could hardly have persisted among Christians already aware of a distance between them and the Jewish community."<sup>(72)</sup>

Dodd must have been aware of counter arguments in terms of the dramatic and literary skill of the Evangelist. He outflanked such arguments decisively;

"The words of Caiaphas are accepted as true prophecy, and this is taken so seriously that they occupy the place in a 'pronouncement story' which is normally given to a *Herrenwort*. Behind all this we seem to discern an early Palestinian Jewish Christianity still within the body of the Jewish nation, and sharing in general

its beliefs and religious attitudes, including the mystique of the Jerusalem priesthood and temple, which in the main line of Christian thought faded rapidly before the concept of the spiritual temple and the high priesthood of Christ."<sup>(73)</sup>

This is almost exactly the opposite of the Cullmann thesis that Johannine Christianity is in close touch with a sectarian Jewish group opposed to the temple. This was a brilliant article but notably in the last part too great a strain was placed on an argument from form alone, and it is doubtful whether form critical criteria had been sufficiently applied to this gospel for this argument to be convincing. From this discussion, Dodd concluded that "The Fourth Evangelist was in a position to draw, directly or indirectly, upon a source of information deriving from a very early Jewish Christian circle still in close association with the synagogue."<sup>(74)</sup> This was supported by three other examples of where John was drawing upon material of a similar kind;-

- 1) the disciples must be prepared for death at the hands of fellow Jews and for expulsion from the Synagogue - already discussed very briefly in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel",
  - 2) the examination of Jesus by the High priest is non-theological in character and accords with the statement in the Babylonian Sanhedrin 43 that Jesus was executed because he 'enticed' and 'led astray Israel'
- and 3) John and the same tractate date the execution of Jesus on Pass-over Eve.<sup>(75)</sup>

Yet there is evidence to the contrary which Dodd also mentioned in this article. Among the examples mentioned are the implication that the High Priesthood was an annual office and a misunderstanding of the position of the Pharisees so that they are made to appear to be an 'estate' of the Sanhedrin like the Priests.<sup>(76)</sup>

This article is the nearest that Dodd comes to accepting Robinson's

thesis that all the controversies of the Fourth Gospel take place within Judaism. Indeed Dodd's position here has the beginnings of ideas that were taken up so readily by J.L. Martyn in "History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel", 1968. As we shall argue later, Dodd was prepared to allow for the Jewish character of the tradition yet was never prepared to seriously consider the possibility of a Jewish character for the completed Gospel. So many later studies seem more acute than Dodd's in this direction. While Dodd had given up the search for sources behind the Fourth Gospel, significant new avenues were opened in studies like W. Nicol's "The Semeia in the Fourth Gospel: tradition and redaction".<sup>(77)</sup> Whilst we cannot summarise this study in any depth, it is an example of where both tradition and redaction are thought to be Jewish. In some ways stimulated by Dodd's work in "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel", Nicol separated - he carefully distinguished this method from reconstruction - a sign source. He suggested that

"It seems probable that S (the sign source) incorporated missionary preaching for the Jews. The decisive difference between S and John is not that John is not Jewish any longer. It seems to me that John is hardly less Jewish than S....the point is that the significant difference between S and John is that John writes of the Jews in such a hostile way that the Gospel rather seems to be the opposite of a missionary book for the Jews."<sup>(78)</sup>

It is possible that this could be due to a geographical change but it really seems that another and more significant cause must be found for the polemical attitude to the Jews in the Fourth Gospel. This may be most easily found in the situation caused by the expulsion of Jewish Christians from the Synagogue.

These articles, all published before "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel", show Dodd working in one direction, the discovery and description of a Johannine tradition. All these articles helped demonstrate the independence of the Fourth Gospel from the Synoptics. Some of them

show Dodd convinced of the Jewish nature of the tradition, without asking on occasion what relevance some of this material would be to the 'Master Propagator' of Christianity in Ephesus in the final years of the first century - at the earliest - while others show the evangelist working with an ancient tradition, thus implicitly posing the question of the nature of the tradition and the Evangelist's relationship to it.

The English-speaking context.

In the opening pages, setting "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" in its context, Dodd drew upon his earlier works, notably "Thirty Years of New Testament Study", 1950, and "Present Tendencies in the Criticism of the Gospels", 1932. For many in previous generations, the historical tradition behind the Fourth Gospel was the Synoptic tradition. We have already reviewed the seminal work of Gardner-Smith who had re-opened the possibility of using the Fourth Gospel as an independent authority for the reconstruction of the life and teaching of Jesus. Dodd acknowledged that this book "Exercised an influence out of proportion to its size"<sup>(79)</sup> yet he seemed less generous when he wrote in terms of its "Crystallising the doubts of many."<sup>(80)</sup> Gardner-Smith placed subsequent scholarship in the position of having to argue for the dependence of John on the Synoptics rather than for its independence. Yet the picture did not change overnight. The commentaries of C.K. Barrett, 1955, and R.H. Lightfoot, 1956, and the "Introduction to the New Testament" of W.G. Kummel claimed that John was dependent on the Synoptics. C.A. Goodwin maintained that John used the Synoptics as he used the Old Testament quoting both from memory and with some accuracy.<sup>(81)</sup> J.A. Bailey argued that John knew and used Luke,<sup>(82)</sup> but the critical opinion was moving towards Gardner-Smith. In 1959 Robinson quoted from a paper that Dodd read to the Cambridge Theological Society in which he stated "The presumption of literary dependence of John on the Synoptics no longer holds."<sup>(83)</sup>

Gardner-Smith had re-established the possibility that the Fourth Gospel might be used in a 'Quest of the historical Jesus'. There had

always been an inclination in English-speaking scholarship to use the Fourth Gospel in this way. and, as we have seen, Dodd was never prepared to write off totally the historical value of the Fourth Gospel. It was otherwise on the continent. Brown complained that "The post-Bultmannians take for granted that in John we have the kerygma so super-imposed upon Jesus that very little of what Jesus says or does can be taken as historical."<sup>(84)</sup> Brown urged that "A re-introduction of some of this Johanne material into the new quest would perhaps give body to its sketch of the historical Jesus."<sup>(85)</sup> For him the publication of "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" was significant; "That a serious volume can be written on historical tradition in John by a scholar of Dodd's stature is a sign that a change is setting in."<sup>(86)</sup> Yet even now this 'change' has not been universally accepted. In the second edition of his commentary Barrett asserts "I do not believe that John intended to supply us with historically verifiable information regarding the life and teaching of Jesus, and that historical traditions of great worth can be disentangled from his interpretative comments."<sup>(87)</sup>

#### T.W. Manson.

The more typical attitude in the English-speaking world in the period just before the studies by Dodd with which we are concerned may be illustrated in the main from the writings of T.W. Manson. In 1947, in a series of lectures entitled "The life of Jesus: a study of the available materials", he attempted with some success to refute the view of Kirsopp Lake among others that "John may contain a few remnants of true tradition but in the main it is fiction."<sup>(88)</sup> It was in this article that Manson divided the Fourth Gospel into Aramaising and non-Aramaising portions - a view already considered in another context - and he argued that most of the words of Jesus are, as expected, to be found in the Aramaising sections. We recall that one of Manson's arguments in favour of identical authorship for the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle of John was that in the Gospel the Evangelist had no alternative but to incorporate some of the tradition.

Manson was impressed by the work of Gardner-Smith. Further he argued that the Fourth Gospel was fundamentally Hebraic. He referred to an earlier article in "The Journal of Theological Studies" - "The Argument from Prophecy"<sup>(89)</sup> in which he argued that the Fourth Gospel was dependent on primitive Palestinian traditions. Relating John 19.18 to Exodus 17.12, he suggested that a deliberate parallelism was drawn between Jesus and Moses, who held his hands aloft at the battle of Rephidim and he sought to show that the first century Palestinian Rabbi, Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, attempted to refute the Christian claim. He also argued that the brazen serpent as a type of the crucified Christ went back to the preaching of Palestinian Christians. Manson was impressed by the links that Dodd had established between the First Epistle of John and the sayings of Jesus, notably those that are to be found in the M strand.<sup>(90)</sup> The links are strongest with the tradition associated with Antioch; "All these lines of argument converge on a single conclusion; that we should consider seriously Sanday's suggestion that there was 'an anticipatory stage of the Johannine teaching, localised in Syria, before the Apostle reached his final home in Ephesus.'"<sup>(91)</sup> Manson suggested that this tradition might be traced back ultimately to Jerusalem and that it found its literary form in the Epistles and Gospel of John. If so, then we must reckon with the possibility that the Fourth Gospel "Contains some material, perhaps more than we yet realise, whose value for historical purposes is as high as anything in the Synoptics."<sup>(92)</sup>

In this lecture, Manson offered an image which has some advantages over Dodd's better known one of a reservoir. He wrote in terms of streams of tradition; "These streams of tradition have their original sources in Galilee and Jerusalem (including Judea and Peraea), the scene of the Ministry, and in the course of their flow they form, as it were, small lakes of standing tradition at various centres of Christian Church life."<sup>(93)</sup> He located the first of these standing lakes at Antioch around 50 A.D., here

may be located "Q", and some ten years later a Johannine tradition and another which we may call M. In all Manson found five such lakes. It is outside the scope of this chapter to discuss this lecture in any detail, but it is worth noting that in 1947 a significant British scholar argued that the Fourth Gospel must not be neglected in the reconstruction of the life and teaching of Jesus. Some nine years later, in his contribution to the Dodd Festschrift, Manson acknowledged that this was now generally recognised in British scholarship.<sup>(94)</sup> In a sentence which Dodd would have applauded, Manson argued "We are driven back to the business of treating the Gospels - in wholes or in detail - as historical documents, using all the resources of exact scholarship and strict historical method for the task."<sup>(95)</sup> Dodd's work was a significant contribution to this task

The extent of this growing consensus may easily be seen. In 1958, J.E. Davey argued "The unhistorical in John is the embroidery of what is historical....The nucleus of the picture of Jesus and His teaching is fact, history not doctrine....therefore the Fourth Gospel has not a little to contribute to a historical reconstruction of the Ministry and personality of Jesus."<sup>(96)</sup> A.M. Hunter maintained that the Fourth Gospel is a primary source for information found nowhere else; he offered six points.<sup>(97)</sup> In the same year, 1959, A.J.B. Higgins gave two lectures at Wycliffe College, Toronto, which were published as "The Historicity of the Fourth Gospel". This book will be considered later. We note his conclusion that "John is independent of all the Synoptic Gospels, but is familiar with traditions at points similar to theirs and with widely different traditions....The sources or traditions used by the fourth evangelist deserve at least as much respect as those employed by the Synoptics."<sup>(98)</sup> He urged that we must be on our guard lest calling John's Gospel the Fourth or the latest led us to believe that there "Is little or nothing in it that is primitive."<sup>(99)</sup> This consensus spread to North America. R.E. Brown's five-stage model of the compilation of the Fourth Gospel is well known. In 1962 in "The problem of historicity in John", he argued "The categorical

rejection of the historicity of John can no longer be maintained."<sup>(100)</sup>

Yet he knew that "We may still find writers stating that the Fourth Gospel cannot be seriously considered as a witness to the historical Jesus, but these represent a type of uncritical traditionalism which arises with age, even in heterodoxy."<sup>(101)</sup> His commentary is marked by a willingness to take the Johannine tradition seriously in respect of historical, social and geographical details found only in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>(102)</sup>

#### The "New Look" and the impact of Qumran.

The article which does more than anything else to summarise the position and mood of English-speaking scholarship in this period, was J.A.T. Robinson's "The New Look on the Fourth Gospel", 1959. He deliberately put his case tentatively, and it involved for the most part the questioning of five pre-suppositions upon which the then orthodox critical opinion rested.<sup>(103)</sup> These five pre-suppositions were:-

"(1) that the Fourth Evangelist is dependent on sources, including (normally) one or more of the Synoptic Gospels. (2) That his own background is other than that of the events and teaching he is purporting to record. (3) That he is not to be regarded, seriously, as a witness to the Jesus of history, but simply to the Christ of faith. (4) That he represents the end-term of theological development in first-century Christianity. (5) That he is not himself the Apostle John nor a direct eye-witness."<sup>(104)</sup>

Each of these 'Pre-suppositions' had, in the past, been argued for and demonstrated more or less to majority satisfaction. Robinson saw the "New Look" characterised by a "certain impertinence, which insists that it may be worth asking other, often apparently naive, questions, which these pre-suppositions would rule out as ones that the Gospel was never meant to answer."<sup>(105)</sup> Our discussion of these pre-suppositions will be brief.

By 1957, when this lecture was delivered, there had long been a movement towards recognising the independence of the Johannine tradition, of this no more need be said. Robinson correctly observed that "In John



we are dealing with a man who is not piecing together written sources but placing his stamp upon the oral tradition of his community with a sovereign freedom."<sup>(106)</sup> This position invites certain questions. Among these are the relationship of this tradition to the rest of primitive Christian tradition, and the problems of recovering it from John's presentation of it in and for his community. There is an insistence on the primitive nature of the Johannine tradition and a recognition of the Evangelist as a creative artist working within the needs of a community. Many of the early supporters of the 'New Look' were so impressed by the first consideration that they never paused to consider the second.

Robinson's discussion of the background of the Evangelist is marked by two insights. He suggests that

"The Evangelist is writing for a non-Palestinian situation" and "His language has echoes and overtones which would evoke a response, and were intended to evoke a response, in circles far wider than those within which the words and works of Jesus himself were circumscribed. It is essentially the Gospel for those who have not seen, because they were not there to see."<sup>(107)</sup>

If this is the environment of the Gospel, nonetheless Robinson doubted whether the Johannine tradition could be located there for both the tradition and the Evangelist should be found in southern Palestine in the short interval between the crucifixion and the fall of Jerusalem.<sup>(108)</sup>

The influence of the Dead Sea Scrolls was significant. Again Robinson's judgement was acute,

"They are important for Johannine study not because they offer closer or more numerous parallels with the language of the Fourth Gospel than any other literature. I doubt really if they do. They are decisive, in my judgement, because for the first time they present us with a body of thought which in date and place (southern Palestine in the first century BC-AD), as well as in fundamental, and not merely verbal, theological affinity, may really represent

an actual background, and not merely a possible environment, for the distinctive categories of the Gospel."<sup>(109)</sup>

There were others who claimed far more for Qumran than was justified. An example is provided by Hunter, for whom the essential Jewishness of the Fourth Gospel had been established by the scrolls. He suggested that the one essential difference between Qumran and the Fourth Gospel is the Christ.<sup>(110)</sup> Hunter rushed too enthusiastically to the 'New Look' but, since Qumran is in the area where Dodd located the Johannine tradition and the sectarians were active in the period before the fall of Jerusalem, Hunter's value judgment will be compared with that of other scholars.

In 1958, K. Stendahl edited a collection of essays, "The Scrolls and the New Testament":<sup>(111)</sup> it was an attempt "To furnish the interested reader with a manageable collection of articles on different aspects of the relation between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament."<sup>(112)</sup> He suggested that the scrolls demonstrated the essential Jewish nature of Johannine and Pauline thought.<sup>(113)</sup> In his essay, "The Qumran scrolls and the Johannine Gospel and Epistles",<sup>(114)</sup> R.E. Brown detected many parallels between the Scrolls and the Johannine literature, the most significant being that a modified dualism is common to both. Within this basic similarity there is also a vast difference;

"It should be evident that the basic difference between the two theologies is Christ. Both believe in the creation of all things by God. Both conceive of the world as divided into two camps of light and darkness, and see these camps arranged under personal leadership. For Qumran the leaders are the two created spirits or angels of light and darkness....for John, however, the leader of light is the uncreated Word, while the leader of evil is the prince of this world. For Qumran the struggle between the forces is still on an equal plane, although light will shine victoriously at the end; for John light is already conquering darkness. Both the literatures maintain that all men are to be assigned to either of the camps. Yet throughout the Qumran literature there is a curious mixture of determinism and free will, while John is quite

clear that men remain in darkness because they obstinately turn away from light. And, finally, Christ is also the point of difference between John and Qumran with respect to the ultimate constituent of the sons of light. If the terminology and ideology are often the same, St. John's whole outlook has been radically re-orientated by the revelation that is Christ."<sup>(115)</sup>

At this point in the essay, Brown suggested, with specific reference to the modified dualism, that "In no other literature do we have so close a terminological and ideological parallel to Johannine usage <sup>(116)</sup> but he was not sure that these similarities are "Sufficient to posit dependence of St. John's outlook upon Qumran ideology".<sup>(117)</sup> In the second part of the essay seven other similarities are considered <sup>(118)</sup> but again the considered conclusion is that "There remains a tremendous chasm between Qumran thought and Christianity."<sup>(119)</sup> Once this point has been emphasised, Brown argued "The argument for interrelation between the Johannine writings and the Qumran literature is indeed strong"<sup>(120)</sup> yet he warns "The ideas of Qumran must have been fairly widespread in certain Jewish circles in the early first century."<sup>(121)</sup> Brown is prepared, nonetheless, to accept the consequences in terms of date and authorship of the Fourth Gospel, believing it to be neither late nor of Hellenistic background.

In the same volume, O. Cullmann contributed "The significance of the Qumran texts for research into the beginnings of Christianity";<sup>(122)</sup> in the next year he published "A new approach to the interpretation of the Fourth Gospel."<sup>(123)</sup> Both these essays reflect a thesis, which received classical expression in "The Johannine Circle":<sup>(124)</sup> "That there existed, on the edge of Judaism, a sort of Jewish Gnosticism which, judged externally, must be considered the cradle of Christianity."<sup>(125)</sup> The importance of Qumran was neatly summarised; "But until now, we have lacked the outer frame of reference within which it would be possible to conceive of a connection between primitive Christianity and this specially slanted sort of Judaism."<sup>(126)</sup> Thus Cullmann suggested a triangular relationship between

nonconformist Judaism, the Johannine group and that of Stephen. Further it is asserted that Johannine Christianity is not a unique phenomenon within primitive Christianity for there are also links with the Epistle to the Hebrews and these types of Christianity are found to have their origins in Palestine. For our present concern, we note that this approach underscores the primitive nature of the Johannine tradition, its Palestinian origin and it offers an explanation of the presence of Hellenistic ideas. He maintained that "The type of Christianity represented by John's Gospel is as old as that represented by Synoptic Christianity. These two types of Christianity must both go back to the very origins of Palestinian Christianity for they correspond to types of Judaism,"<sup>(127)</sup> Synoptic Christianity being held to correspond to official Judaism. Interestingly Cullmann suggested that there was some opposition between John's church and Qumran, chapter ten carefully distinguishing the martyred teacher of Righteousness from Christ.<sup>(128)</sup>

In this essay Cullmann was not concerned to show the state of scholarly debate but rather to use recent discoveries to demonstrate the plausibility of a thesis that had, in essentials, already been worked out. As it stands, the links that Cullmann suggests—mainly in terms of attitude to the Temple and Samaria—between the Fourth Gospel and Qumran are not that convincing.

Robinson was among those who thought that the scrolls had rehabilitated the Fourth Evangelist's picture of the Baptist; "The discovery of the Scrolls has not only made us review the historical accuracy of the account of the Baptist furnished by the Fourth Gospel: it has revealed that in theology (italicized) the language and outlook of Qumran have striking affinities not merely with the Baptist but even more with those of the Evangelist."<sup>(129)</sup> His considered verdict was that "The new evidence has not changed the whole picture; but it has changed the perspective. The other influences fall into a different place and many of them will, I believe

be seen to be more important for understanding the reception (italicized) of the Gospel than for interpreting its background or assessing its purpose."(130)

Of the third pre-supposition - that the Fourth Gospel may be taken seriously as a witness to the Christ of faith, and not the Jesus of history - we need say little here. The "New Look" was prepared in theory at least, to use the Fourth Gospel in a new "Quest of the historical Jesus". Like the Synoptics, the Fourth Gospel was a witness to the Christ of faith but, in an argument that recalled a Doddian emphasis, Robinson maintains that for the Fourth Evangelist "The Christ of faith includes the Jesus of history."(131)

The fourth pre-supposition maintained that the Fourth Gospel stood at the end of the scale of theological development in the New Testament. Robinson contested this, accepting Dodd's idea that the eschatological teaching of the Gospel had been spared the "Progressive apocalypticization of the message of Jesus"(132) which may be seen in the Synoptics. This was a contentious area in which to seek to demonstrate the case. Moreover, Robinson's argument here is not satisfactory for it seems to imply that theologising of the tradition developed at the same pace everywhere for the argument amounts to saying that the Fourth Gospel must be primitive because it has not undergone this development. The more satisfactory understanding, then as now, was that Christian thought developed differently in many places due to all manner of considerations, chronology being but one such consideration.

The case could have been developed in a less contentious area than eschatology. In 1945, E.R. Goodenough published "John, a primitive Gospel"(133) He offered a number of reasons in support of this contention of which the most important was "If Colossians and Romans could have been written by 55 A.D., so far as our knowledge of any theological 'development' is concerned John could have been written just as early."(134) As stated, it is doubtful whether his case stands for in each instance an

effective counter argument can be offered but, at least, it was significant in forcing scholars to face the possibility that the Fourth Gospel could be both theologically mature and early enough to stand close to primitive tradition.

The fifth pre-supposition was that the author could not have been the Apostle John, nor indeed, an eyewitness. Robinson acutely observed, citing the title of one of Bultmann's books, "The History of the Synoptic Tradition",<sup>(135)</sup> that in Synoptic criticism the centre of interest was the tradition and the community behind it whereas "In the Fourth Gospel, however, the Evangelist filled the eye."<sup>(136)</sup> This may well reflect the fact that the question of authorship- and also the authenticity of the Gospel with which it had been indissolubly linked- had been the battleground of a previous generation. Oddly at the very time that there was a growing interest in the Synoptic evangelists themselves, there was also an interest in the Johannine tradition and the community behind it. As Robinson argued, "The decisive question is the status and origin of the Johannine tradition."<sup>(137)</sup> There was a readiness now to consider the possibility that "There is real continuity, not merely in the memory of one old man, but in the life of an ongoing community, with the earliest days of Christianity."<sup>(138)</sup>

Such, in very brief compass, was the context in which Dodd worked upon and later published "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel".

"Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" - Overview.

Dodd outlined the purpose of this massive tome; "The first question we are asking is this, can we in any measure recover, and describe a strain of tradition lying behind the Fourth Gospel, distinctive of it, and independent of other strains known to us?"<sup>(139)</sup> Dodd attempted to distinguish between what might reasonably be considered editorial and what has been taken over from sources. Once this distinction has been made, it is a case of mounting a minute comparison between the latter and the Synoptic Gospels;

"In comparing, therefore, a given passage in the other gospels, we have to inquire whether there are coincidences of language or content going beyond what might reasonably be expected in works having behind them the general tradition of the early Church, and next whether there are many marked differences which might be accounted for (supposing he were using the Synoptics) by known mannerisms of the evangelist, or his known doctrinal tendencies. If not, then there is a prima facie case for treating the passage as independent of the Synoptics, and we have to ask whether it has characteristics, in form or substance, or possible indications of a Sitz im Leben, which would associate it with traditional material so far as this is known to us."<sup>(140)</sup>

So, in Wilder's words,

"A recurrent procedure is to identify the distinctive features in the Johannine version of material related to the Synoptics, to demonstrate that such features cannot be explained by literary dependence, and to argue for the primitive character of such historical tradition, always first setting aside traits assignable to familiar Johannine theology and style. Even where no Synoptic parallels are present, material used by John can be shown to have credentials of primitiveness by formal criteria, whether short narratives pericopes or sayings or parables. The case made for extensive roots

of very early historical tradition behind John's theological Gospel goes far beyond familiar arguments for the superiority of certain features of its chronology and topography."<sup>(141)</sup>

Thus the argument is essentially cumulative and interlocking. Occasionally complaints were voiced; "A certain amount of duplication and overlapping results from this method, and much space is also given to what would seem for the intended reader an unnecessary review of familiar Synoptic detail, not always directly relevant to the general thesis."<sup>(142)</sup>

After the introduction, the Fourth Gospel is divided into two parts, "The Narrative" and "The Sayings": the first part is subdivided into three, "The Passion Narrative", "The Ministry" and "John the Baptist and the first disciples," whilst the second is subdivided into five; "Discourse and dialogue in the Fourth Gospel", "Sayings common to John and the Synoptics", "Parabolic forms", "Sequences of sayings" and "Predictions." Our intention is to take soundings in some of these areas, move on to the conclusion of the book and finally to evaluate it, noting the impact that it had on contemporary scholarship. As much of the final evaluation will depend upon Dodd's understanding of the nature of tradition and the Evangelist's relation to it, this will be considered in a separate section.

#### The Passion Narrative.

In turning to the Passion Narrative first. Dodd was not only turning to the heart of the Gospel, but he was also turning to that area of the Gospel in which, from the thirties, he had seen an account essentially independent of the Synoptics and one with few theological overtones. It may be said at the outset that many reviewers were more than satisfied. Typical was the reaction of Hunter, "This piece of the argument which covers the first one hundred and fifty pages I find very compelling."<sup>(143)</sup> Dodd accepted the generally held form critical conclusion that the Passion Narrative is unlike the accounts of the rest of the Ministry in that it is an ordered whole in which "For the most part each incident is intelligible only in its place within the continuous sequence, depending on what has gone before and



preparing for what comes after."<sup>(144)</sup> Further, he noted that the Fourth Gospel follows the same pattern as the Synoptics "With no more variation from the common order than is to be observed among the Synoptics themselves."<sup>(145)</sup> This does not imply dependence. That John is essentially independent was demonstrated from an argument that had been followed in "According to the Scriptures." Here, as there, the argument built upon the most searching examination of the use of testimonia, which "Give to the narrative its specific religious and theological content, and they must have done much to determine the forms which the narrative assumed, even, as we must suppose, in the earliest oral tradition. So far from being embroidery, they must be regarded as the firm scaffolding supporting the structure."<sup>(146)</sup> The testimonies for all four gospels are set out in tabular form, of Mark's seventeen citations, John has only four and to these he has added five non-Markan ones, but none of these coincide with the non-Markan testimonies in Matthew or Luke. Dodd was concerned to guard his flank and not to claim too much;

"As with Luke, we could readily understand that this evangelist, who is certainly less addicted to Old Testament quotation than the others, may have preferred to reduce the number, but it less easy to see why, in that case, he should have added fresh testimonies - unless, indeed, they are such as to give a different theological turn to the narrative; but, as we shall see, they do nothing of the kind."<sup>(147)</sup>

Few scholars doubted Beare's verdict;

"It would be impossible to go through the discussion in detail, but the author seems to have given ample ground for his conclusion that 'There is embedded in the Passion Narrative of the Fourth Gospel an understanding of the Passion in terms of the righteous sufferer of the Psalms, the Suffering Servant of Deutero-Isaiah, and the martyred leader of Zechariah, which we have every reason to believe primitive, and which John may fairly be supposed to owe to pre-canonical tradition'." <sup>(148)</sup>

If there was any detectable weakness, Beare found it with regard to the Suffering Servant. This was a view that was to receive increasing support in this period.<sup>(149)</sup>

Thus Dodd concluded that there were three independent Passion Narratives; Mark -Matthew, Luke and John. The argument had been cumulative, no single piece of evidence was decisive but the strength of the cumulative argument is impressive.

The same conclusion was reached in his decision of the actual account of the Passion, again Hunter was impressed, "Then, taking in turn the various acts of the Passion drama, he adduces strong evidence for the view that John's account of these events rests on a primitive scheme common indeed to all the evangelists but, in John, representing a third development of it along with the form behind Mark (Matthew) and Luke."<sup>(150)</sup> Of the Pedilavium, Dodd argued that "Stripped of the theological commentary, which we may fairly attribute to the evangelist himself, it is a simple story about Jesus, enforcing by his example a lesson of humility and service."<sup>(151)</sup> We are not allowed to regard it as a dramatisation of the saying preserved in Luke 22.27 for this would be too restricted an understanding of the many comparable passages, both within the Synoptics and also behind Philippians 2.6-11;

"When we reflect on the importance which precepts of humility and mutual subjection and service hold in various forms of catecheis, and the various ways in which such precepts are often related to the thought of Christ's self-sacrifice, we shall be disposed to find in Phil. 2.1-11 not (in substance at least) a Pauline creation, but one form of a very fundamental article of the Christian Didache, deeply rooted in the primitive tradition of the words, deeds and sufferings of Jesus Christ. We find it variously formulated, in aphorism, in dialogue, in extended passages of combined narrative and dialogue where the whole setting gives point to the particular saying, in catechetical maxims, and, finally, in the kind of credal

hymn (if such it be) which we have in Phil. 2. To these manifold forms under which this fundamental Lehrstück might be presented we must now add what we may call the 'exemplary story', as we have it in John 13.4-17."<sup>(152)</sup>

This has been cited at length because it shows the extent of the reservoir of tradition that was available to the evangelists, but a fundamental question still remains unanswered. Dodd knew that the Evangelist had "Handled this unit after his fashion to suggest, through symbolism, the profoundly theological ideas which he wished to be in the mind of his readers in embarking on the story of Christ's suffering and death"<sup>(153)</sup> and we have to ask, even if Dodd did not think that he could answer it, whether this incident was handed down as part of the Passion tradition known to John, or, was it handed down as an independent unit which John has incorporated into his Passion Narrative. There is another more important question that might be raised of Dodd's method, with his understanding of an historical event as "An occurrence plus the interest and the meaning the occurrence possessed for the persons involved in it,"<sup>(154)</sup> should Dodd strip away the theological meaning? If he does, on his terms, is he left with an historical event?

Passing on to the arrest in Gethsemane, Dodd argued "There is here no sufficient ground for inferring that the story of the assault on the slave was derived from the Synoptic Gospels, in spite of the striking verbal resemblances in the clause describing the actual blow."<sup>(155)</sup> Dodd suggested variation within the oral tradition for to posit dependence on the Synoptics involves John being dependent on all, apparently preferring one to another quite haphazardly. John names both assailant and victim; there had long been an axiom that the presence of names was an indication of both lateness and fictitiousness. Dodd had no difficulty in demonstrating that no such general rule held for the New Testament. For example, the omission of Mark's "Jairus" and "Bartimaeus" by Matthew who substituted "Caiaphas" for Mark's "High Priest". Dodd argued for the

authenticity of the naming of Peter on the grounds of general probability; "If we are to take account of the general probabilities of the situation, we should reflect that if there were two swords among the Twelve, as Luke says there were (22.38), it is more than likely that Peter had one of them, and if he had, he was (so far as we know him) not the man to let it rest in its sheath."<sup>(156)</sup> This argument from general probability, established by use of all the Gospels, is used frequently in this book. It is as difficult to refute as it is to accept. A similar argument is mounted about "Malchus": there may be here no more than a "Dramatic touch of verisimilitude"<sup>(157)</sup> yet, since Dodd saw no reason to deny the truth of 18.15 ("A disciple known to the High Priest"), there is a channel "Through which knowledge of the man's name might have passed into Christian tradition."<sup>(158)</sup> Whilst Dodd tends to accept this position, he concluded "So far as I can see we have no sufficient evidence for accepting or rejecting the names of Peter and Malchus as traditional."<sup>(159)</sup>

The honesty of this conclusion indicates the problems that remain in the ultimate evaluation of the Johannine tradition. In the book there is nothing that takes us beyond the equation that 'traditional' equals 'historically accurate'. In the particular case, discussed above, nothing of serious significance is at issue, but there are occasions when the tradition must be weighed. Two examples of this may be easily provided. With regard to the betrayal, Dodd argued that "It looks as if he (John) had followed a tradition which, as it knew nothing of the bribery of Judas by the priests, so also knew nothing of the crowning enormity of the traitor's kiss."<sup>(160)</sup> There is something at stake here, maybe even a theological understanding of Jesus. In the Johannine narrative there is no need for Judas to betray Jesus. Dodd knew that John's account might owe something to his dramatic skill and theological understanding but he warned against rushing to this conclusion. John has indeed insisted throughout his narrative that Jesus cannot be taken by surprise yet he has also made explicit what was implicit in the Synoptics, that "Jesus gives himself up to death by his own sovereign

will,"<sup>(161)</sup> and the most we may argue is that "A theological motive... has selected this element in the common tradition and isolated it for special emphasis."<sup>(162)</sup> Referring to "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel", pages 423-33, where he had argued that 18.9 is not the work of a redactor who misunderstood 17.12, Dodd suggested that we may accept the essential historicity of the Johannine narrative, "The Good Shepherd seeing the wolf coming, laying down his life for the sheep."<sup>(163)</sup> Thus Dodd concluded "The self-surrender of Christ to save His disciples from the police is, sub specie aeternitatis, no other than the sacrifice by which He saves mankind from darkness and death."<sup>(164)</sup> Thus to invert Dodd's words, this is the historical that makes sense of the supra-historical. Having argued that we might well find genuinely historical elements here, Dodd was nonetheless well aware that "Motives arising out of the Johannine theology have influenced this part of the Passion Narrative."<sup>(165)</sup> Even this admission does "Not foreclose the question whether or not the evangelist was working upon materials derived from the tradition."<sup>(166)</sup> Certainly a tradition other than the Synoptic and the question of the value of the Johannine tradition cannot be postponed indefinitely. Dodd was able to find some support for the authenticity of the Johannine tradition in the reaction of the soldiers who came to arrest Jesus. Their reaction, which was that typical before a Theophany, can hardly be taken as historical but, Dodd suggested, that there might well be links with Psalms 34.4 and 26.2 which may have provided testimonies. Both psalms, as Dodd interprets them, refer to the Righteous Sufferer, a key figure in the Passion testimonies. The most that this argument could suggest was that John's tradition was independent of the Synoptics, although in touch with the key figure behind the developing understanding of the Passion, but the known theological tendencies of the Evangelist should have alerted Dodd to the real possibility that John may well have been dramatising his tradition at this point.

The second example is the involvement of the Romans in the arrest of Jesus. It may well be true that "This has no obvious theological or

apologetic motive,"<sup>(167)</sup> but were the Romans so involved? At some point this question must be asked. It is not enough to comment that this "May or may not be derived from a special strain of the tradition."<sup>(168)</sup>

Dodd was too accomplished a scholar not to know that there were parts of the Passion Narrative that owed much to John's theology. A good example is provided by the story of doubting Thomas; even here we must recognise "A dramatisation (in our author's manner) of the traditional motive of the incredulity of some or all of the disciples,"<sup>(169)</sup> yet this pericope is dominated by a Johannine theme - that of seeing and believing - and he concluded that it had been welded into the narrative. Dodd found no theological motive in Jesus commending his mother to the Beloved Disciple. He was not sure that it was originally part of the Passion Narrative since it breaks the unities of time and space; "Analogy, therefore, would suggest the conclusion that the pericope we are now discussing did not form part of the Passion Narrative but reached our evangelist through oral tradition."<sup>(170)</sup> As Simon noted, Dodd argued that "Where John adds to the Synoptics without contradicting them, there is no sufficient ground for rejecting what he says."<sup>(171)</sup> Why not allow this here? Further, if the pericope shows no trace of Johannine theological interest, why should the Evangelist have inserted such an isolated pericope precisely here, unless he were intending to make a theological point?

Ultimately Dodd concluded that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the Fourth Gospel was dependent on the Synoptics. Much points to its dependence upon an independent strain of the tradition yet questions arise at this point. How strong is the essentially cumulative argument? Secondly, did Dodd allow sufficiently for the literary skill of the Evangelist? He had previously noted the dramatic character of chapters 4 and 7-8, and in this book he suggested that John presented the trial in dramatic form, as it were with an outer and inner stage.<sup>(172)</sup> While he was becoming convinced of the historical value of the Johannine tradition, was Dodd giving due consideration to the Evangelist's use of it? I doubt

it; "Subject to some measure of 'writing up' by the evangelist"(173) is altogether too vague. In fact Dodd brought to the Passion Narrative a long-held belief that it contained nothing of symbolic or theological value, since John was content to tell us what happened. More seriously he evaded two very substantial difficulties. Whereas most scholars saw some theological motive in the handing over of the mother of Jesus to the Beloved Disciple, Dodd expediently removed this pericope from the Passion Narrative and at 19.29 he accepted a very improbable reading, partly due to his finding no Paschal symbolism in the Fourth Gospel, and partly due to his stress on the factual nature of the Passion Narrative. At both these points, Dodd has departed from the 'objective' approach that he so strongly commended and moved into the 'subjective' that he so feared.(174)

Dodd was criticised on another front by M.I. Williams, who argued that it was methodologically incorrect to separate the Johannine Passion Narrative from the rest of the Gospel. In Mark such a separation might well be justified, but not in the Fourth Gospel where the "Passion narrative moves at the same leisurely pace as the rest of the Gospel,"(175) "In contrast to Mark, which moves from the notice of the high priests' determination to kill Jesus in 14.1 to its consummation with some rapidity."(176) Of the dialogue with Pilate, Dodd wrote "It appears.....that the author's imagination has been at work in the production of this intensely dramatic narrative."(177) Williams pertinently observes,

"But once it is granted that the evangelist has been composing freely (even if 'working upon given material') and that this composition must be distinguished from the rest of the narrative, then the case for treating the Passion narrative as a self-contained outsize pericope falls to the ground. Any attempt to treat the Johannine Passion narrative like this has an obscuring effect both on the 'outside' events - the observable series of events which brought Jesus to the cross - and the 'inside' events - the communication of his intention by Jesus to his disciples, and his preparation

of them for what was going to happen in Jerusalem."<sup>(178)</sup>

It was in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" that Dodd first advanced in complete form the thesis that the Passion Narrative was unlike the rest of the Gospel.<sup>(179)</sup> Williams was one of very few to question this and to mount a considerable argument against it. Dodd's methodology is suspect at this point.

### The Ministry.

One hundred pages are devoted to a study of the ministry; the discussion is conducted under five headings.<sup>(180)</sup> Dodd persuaded most of his reviewers of the independence of the Johannine account.<sup>(181)</sup> Our major sounding will be taken in the last of Dodd's sections, "Transitional passages and topographical notices." This is not the insignificant area that it might appear, for not only is it a contested area in modern Johannine scholarship, but also because Dodd's discussion here recalls his earlier work in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" and "The framework of the Gospel narratives", 1943.

Recalling his study of 1943, in the context of its being criticised by Nineham in "Studies in the Gospels, essays in memory of R.H. Lightfoot", Dodd summarised his position; "If the transitional passages in Mark....be written out consecutively, they form without any manipulation, a continuous outline covering a considerable part of Mark's account of the Ministry."<sup>(182)</sup> If it be objected that this is natural since Mark would want to provide his readers with such a framework, it must be noted that "The frame provided does not properly fit the pictures to be framed and at certain points the outline derived from the transitional passages is not consistent with Mark's own arrangement of the pericopae."<sup>(183)</sup> The framework, as well as the pericope, reached Mark through the tradition; as Dodd saw it, Nineham perceived this; "History, but not the direct testimony of an eyewitness, exercised control over this Gospel."<sup>(184)</sup> Dodd argued that the same was true for John - leaving aside some, for example 2.23-25 and



12.17-19 which are the work of the Evangelist - where there are seven transitional passages where

"We have good grounds for accepting the following as traditional data, summarising periods in the ministry of Jesus, with indications of the places where they were spent: Jesus went down to Capernaum, and stayed there a short time. After this he went with his disciples to Judaea and stayed there, baptizing. Meanwhile John was at Aenon-by-Salim, because there was abundant water there, and people kept coming to him getting baptized.....Later, Jesus left Judaea for Galilee, because, as he himself said, a prophet is not honoured in his own country. So when he arrived in Galilee he was welcomed by the Galilaeans....Again he went over Jordan, to the place where John had formerly baptized; he stayed there and many came to him....and from there he went to the region bordering on the Wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and stayed there with his disciples." (185)

Dodd knew that these do not provide a totally coherent outline of the Ministry but nonetheless "This exiguous group of passages does afford some ground for concluding that they originally belonged to a single body of tradition, which, like the Marcan 'generalising summaries' and 'itinerary fragments', recorded in bald outline the main movement of Jesus." (186)

Higgins was impressed by Dodd's arguments; "The independence of the Gospel of John is nowhere more strikingly illustrated than in its topographical information." (187) Dodd argued strongly in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" that we can be sure that this topographical information had not been subjected to any Johannine 'moulding'. (188) For Dodd, as for others, this topographical information is a sure sign of a southern Palestinian tradition - only two Galilean places are mentioned. Dodd concluded that we can go beyond this and suggested that we may find here a tradition "Associated with a psychologically metropolitan outlook, in contrast to the strongly Galilaean standpoint and outlook revealed in

the Synoptics."<sup>(189)</sup> It would be difficult to demonstrate this 'metropolitan outlook' not least because so much of it might be due to Johanne 'moulding'. Here, again, Dodd has gone beyond what might be 'objectively' established - the existence of a tradition with an interest in the south-and towards that feared 'Subjectivity'. In this area, Dodd followed the suggestion of R.H. Lightfoot, in his "Locality and doctrine in the Gospels", that there was a certain tension in the Resurrection Narratives between Galilee and Jerusalem. Dodd wondered whether this tension may have extended over the whole of the Ministry; "The strain of tradition embodied in the Synoptic Gospels appears to be associated with the Twelve, most of them, if not all, Galilaeans. Was there another group of 'witnesses' to the tradition, connected with Judaea and Jerusalem?"<sup>(190)</sup> Of this Simon observes correctly, "Interesting more than fully convincing."<sup>(191)</sup>

There had long been a debate about the status and purpose of John's topographical information. In the 1933 edition of his "Introduction to the New Testament", Moffatt took issue with Arnold's suggestion that it was valueless, John choosing the first name that came into his head and countered by insisting that the Evangelist must have had "First hand acquaintance with the topography of Palestine prior to A.D. 70"<sup>(192)</sup> and that his geography is not symbolic.<sup>(193)</sup>

Yet within a few years of the publication of "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" the belief that the geography of the Fourth Gospel was in some way symbolic was gaining ground. In a footnote Dodd denied this; "John cannot be said to have any clear or consistent idea about the respective roles of Galilee and Judaea."<sup>(194)</sup> He maintained that

"We hear nothing of 'making disciples' in Galilee, nor are any Galilaeans said to have 'believed' (with the exception of the family of the βασιλικος as Capernaum), though πιστευειν is constantly predicated of people in Judaea, in Samaria and in Transjordan.

In vii.1 Galilee is a refuge from the hostility of Judaea, and so, in a sense, in iv.1-3."<sup>(195)</sup>

In his "Galilee and Judea in the Fourth Gospel"<sup>(196)</sup> W.A. Meeks considered and rejected Dodd's thesis arguing that there is a geographical symbolism in the Fourth Gospel "Shaped by the apparently deliberate dialectic between Jerusalem, the place of judgement and rejection, and Galilee and Samaria, the places of acceptance and discipleship."<sup>(197)</sup> Meeks proceeds from the idea that the Johannine community believed that Jesus originated from Galilee. This belief caused some controversy between them and a Jewish group. The Johannine emphasis can be seen most clearly in 7.40-52. Dodd argued that the tradition that the Messiah's birth must be in Bethlehem was Christian from the beginning.<sup>(198)</sup> Meeks rejects this, counter-arguing that Jesus' origins are an embarrassment to the Johannine community precisely because they know that the Messiah must be born in Bethlehem. The Fourth Gospel does not know of the tradition of the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem. Barrett, however, argues that we may suppose that John was writing in his customary ironical style and that the earthly origins of Jesus are of little significance. Dodd had offered an identical explanation in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel:"<sup>(199)</sup> Meeks rejected such an explanation remarking correctly of Dodd's position that "It accords poorly with his hypothesis that John is a missionary tract addressed to educated pagans."<sup>(200)</sup> Meeks argues that any such explanation "Fails to explicate the emphasis in the Fourth Gospel on Jesus' origins in Galilee. It is not the case merely that his earthly place of origin is insignificant, for in John 7.49-52 itself his Galilean origin is emphasised over against the presumed origin of the Messiah and the unspecified but non-Galilean origin of the prophet."<sup>(201)</sup>

There are problems concerning the  $\pi\alpha\tau\rho\iota\varsigma$  of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel. The proverb, quoted in 4.44, known also from the Synoptic tradition, demands that Judea or Jerusalem is the homeland of Jesus. In this chapter the Galileans welcome Jesus, verse 45, while in verse 50 "The man (the royal official from Capernaum) believed the word that Jesus had said to him." Meeks complained that Bultmann had interpreted this as rejection!

Dodd's position is not far from this; "It is perhaps more significant that the statement that Jesus was welcomed by the Galilaeans leads to nothing. It is not required to prepare the way for the healing of the son of the βασιλικος, which does not presuppose any general acceptance of Jesus in Galilee - rather the contrary."<sup>(202)</sup> This last remark suggests that the Johannine tradition is being interpreted from a Synoptic standpoint. Dodd has considerable difficulty in handling this transitional passage;

"The conclusion which I should, very tentatively, suggest is that in 4.1-3, 43-5 we are in touch with a fragment of 'framework' material which has been largely confused in the process of the composition of this part of the gospel. It contains, be it observed, the only clear recognition in this gospel of a successful ministry in Galilee (except in so far as this is implied in the reference to the crowds in the introduction to the story of the Feeding of the multitude (6.20))"<sup>(203)</sup>

This caveat conceals what is apparently a very successful ministry. Further it is significant that five times in 4.43-54 it is stated that Jesus left Judea and went to Galilee. There can be little doubt that so far as the Fourth Gospel is concerned the proverb is fulfilled "In the failure of 'the Jews' to receive him (Jesus) on his first visit to Jerusalem."<sup>(204)</sup> For Meeks, the presence of Ἰδω is significant for it enables him to link this proverb with 1.11, as indeed, Dodd had implicitly done in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" page 351f. Meeks explicitly drew the conclusion that the proverb repeats 1.11; "Jesus' πατρις his Ἰδω is Judea. Jerusalem in John is the centre of 'the world', the place of decision. But the πατρις is not Jesus' native land, but his own land."<sup>(205)</sup> Thus when he goes to his native land, he is welcomed; "Verse 45 therefore becomes a paradigm of 1.12....The Galileans are those who receive Jesus."<sup>(206)</sup> Meeks is able to support this contention from Dodd's own arguments in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" where he argued specifically of the visit to Jerusalem

for the Feast of Tabernacles - and implicitly for the other visits as well - that it symbolised the coming of the redeemer/Logos to his own and his rejection by them. Dodd did not see in the acceptance of Jesus by the Galileans - a significant acceptance even if they did not truly understand Jesus - and the Samaritans, in another apparently successful ministry, a "Symbol of the redeemer's acceptance by others, who thereby become 'truly children of God', the real Israel." (207)

Dodd argued that the repetition in 4.43 of the statement that "Jesus left for Galilee", 4.3b, is an indication that "The Samaritan episode is intruded here into what was originally a single and continuous journey from Judaea to Galilee." (208) Meeks had no difficulty in querying this since the phrase is, as we have noted, used five times in the βασιλικος narrative creating the prima facie impression that the Evangelist is emphasising the withdrawal of Jesus from Judaea into Galilee. This is damaging to Dodd's position, but much more so is Meek's suggestion that all Dodd's transitional passages "Belong within the larger theological symbolism of the gospel. Five out of the seven passages emphasise the places where Jesus 'stayed', 'went about' or 'spent time' (2.12; 3.22f; 7.1f; 10.40-42 and 11.54). The meaning of these passages is to be sought in the Johannine theme of Jesus' 'staying' (μενεν) with his disciples." (209) μενεν is never used of Jesus' visits to Jerusalem and Judaea. That μενεν can be a significant theological term for John is obvious, but this does not necessarily mean that every single instance is theologically significant. 3.22 is the most interesting of these transitional passages since it contains the only occurrence of διατριβεν which might well confirm Dodd's suggestion that this verse is drawn from pre-canonical tradition. Of the others, it would be difficult indeed to conclude that there was either any theological meaning or any sense of belief, and in the last there are a number of manuscripts - the majority but the poorer - which read διετριβεν which might be due to assimilation to 3.22. It is difficult to agree with Meeks' thesis on this evidence but problems remain with these transitional

passages. Meeks argued that the Gospel might well reflect the situation in John's church; as Jesus met with opposition in the south, so too, did John's Church, and as Jesus 'stayed' in Samaria and Galilee, so John's Church met with missionary success in that area.

Meeks may, or may not, be correct in his arguments, which have points of contact with many recent theories. In what initially appears an insignificant part of his investigation, Dodd's discussion is open to damaging criticisms, yet these do not appear to be fatally damaging for Meeks has to explain the success of the Judean ministry in 3.22-26 but Dodd's discussion of 2.23 is weak. On the one hand, he does not accept that this is a 'pure' transitional passage since it shows signs of the Evangelist's hand yet, on the other, he does not discuss in any significant detail why 'Believed on his name' should, in this context, appear to be associated with an inadequate faith, whereas in 1.12 it is certainly used of adequate faith, an alternative expression for 'Those who received him'.

This illustrates that there is one task of recovering the Johannine tradition and another of describing John's use of it. Dodd was much more successful in the former task. Indeed in this book he should consistently have kept to this task without venturing any value judgements. If he was to be successful in this passing of value judgements, then the discussion should have been much more thorough.

Throughout his discussion of the Ministry, Dodd employed exactly the same methods as he had done with the Passion Narrative. The same method had been used by Higgins with regard to 'The Official's Son', 4.46-54 and chapter 6 with identical results; "The deposit of tradition is in no way basically and intrinsically inferior and in some points superior to the Synoptic parallels" so that "The presumption is that other narratives, unrepresented in the other Gospels, were derived from trustworthy tradition." (210)

We conclude this section by briefly mentioning points of interests

reflected in the reviews. Dodd did not convince all scholars of the independence of the Johannine account of the Anointing. Interestingly, three Roman Catholics, Bligh, Brown and Vawter, were among those unconvinced. They were more convinced by the presence of verbal similarities than Dodd's attempts at explaining them; Brown suggesting a final editing of the Gospel by one familiar with the Synoptics whereas Bligh - and for him this was a significant weakness in Dodd's case - argued that the use of the rare  $\pi\lambda\omega\tau\iota\kappa\eta\varsigma$  and the aphorism about the poor cannot be accounted for either in terms of textual criticism or in terms of each evangelist using independently an overlapping strand of the tradition.<sup>(211)</sup> This may, perhaps, be too simple a view of tradition; Lindars considers the possibility that John might have "An independent version of the Bethany story which has already been influenced by unconscious assimilation to the other (Luke 7. 36-50 which is set in Galilee)."<sup>(212)</sup> This is preferable to Dodd's suggestion that one incident lies behind Mark 14.3-9, John 12.1-8 and Luke 7. 36-50.

Many reviewers were prepared to favourably consider Dodd's suggestion that the origin of the First Sign is to be sought in a parable which in the course of transmission has been worked up into a miracle story. Dodd had no difficulty in showing that the pericope shows many signs of John's theological language, but we should expect this since John rarely fails to put his stamp upon the material. There is also evidence that the pericope belongs to the tradition but he maintained that "Its central features appear to be of non-Christian origin."<sup>(213)</sup> Indeed this story comes from a late stage of the tradition but the development within the transmission had probably taken place before the Evangelist received it and "Exploited it for its symbolic value, thus in a sense restoring it to the status (of an image of the truth) which the (conjectured) original parable possessed"<sup>(214)</sup> Here, unconsciously, Dodd's understanding of the Evangelist as the one who proclaimed the most mature Christian theology is at work in the suggestion that he has 'restored' the original. There is another oddity here in that

the Christian tradition can take over something of non-Christian origin. Dodd realised this for his assertion about the non-Christian origins concluded an argument which contained

"That a Christian evangelist should have consciously taken over a Dionysiac legend and transferred it, with the implication, 'A greater than Bacchus is here' (as has been suggested), seems contrary to the whole ethos of the primitive preaching and gospel writing. The time was not yet when apologists could safely draw parallels between Christ and the figures of pagan mythology."<sup>(215)</sup>

Yet, as Beare remarked, the emphasis is on 'consciously' for Dodd would not dismiss the possibility that the story "May have been adapted to Christian use without any consciousness of its pagan associations."<sup>(216)</sup>

Beare was exuberantly enthusiastic about the suggestion; "Could a scholar in the first bloom of youth show a more exuberant spirit of 'nothing venture nothing win'? There is almost a wistful ring to his confession that it is all conjecture."<sup>(217)</sup> Dodd's discussion ignores what might be a decisive Jewish background to be found, for example, in the wine of the Torah and the abundance of wine as a symbol of the Messianic age. The whole pericope is embedded in a section which deals with the superiority of Christianity over Judaism.

Dodd's discussion of the Raising of Lazarus was similarly well received. He argued that John had thoroughly worked over the tradition but it is not an allegory nor does it owe anything to the Lucan parable of Dives and Lazarus. Indeed the story has something of the form of a healing pericope, and he compared it with the Marcan stories of the Epileptic boy and Jairus's daughter. John's other healings have a basis in tradition, and there is no good reason for denying that this one too has such an origin, but Dodd suggests that there is no hope of reconstructing the story, precisely because John has so thoroughly worked it over. Indeed, "The probability is that this story had never been fully fixed in any conventional pattern, but remained subject to the variations of a fluid



and unformed tradition, out of which the evangelist took it, to give it a characteristic literary form dictated by the demands of his particular design."<sup>(218)</sup> This implies two types of tradition, one fixed, the other fluid, and the Evangelist is more bound by the former than the latter.

Whilst Dodd's argument is generally convincing, it is worth recalling that for much British scholarship this episode was the focus of the discussion of the problem of historicity of the Johannine narrative and it is conceivable that Dodd was predisposed here to discover something traditional. For him 'traditional' generally meant 'historically reliable'. Dodd's discussion did not do justice to the Johannine treatment by which "The whole story has become an allegory of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus, relating them to the experience of every man, whom Lazarus represents."<sup>(219)</sup> Here Lindars' discussion is more satisfying than Dodd's.

John the Baptist and the First Disciples.

This sixty-four page discussion attracted a good deal of attention from the reviewers, not least because Dodd's position here had been anticipated in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel". Like Higgins, Dodd was impressed by the Johannine account.<sup>(220)</sup> The majority opinion of the reviewers may be put in Brown's words; "The most interesting comparison is in the study of the Johannine narrative about John the Baptist, where Dodd makes a very good case for John's possession of genuine tradition."<sup>(221)</sup> Others were concerned about Dodd's refusal to face the possibility of polemic; "It is strange, however, that Dodd refuses to recognise the polemical element in the Fourth Gospel's attitude towards the Baptist circle, stressed by Baldensperger, Bultmann, Cullmann and others."<sup>(222)</sup> Such a polemic would have had relevance for an Ephesian community.

Dodd suggested

"That in giving his account of the ministry of John the Baptist and its relation to the Ministry of Jesus Christ the Fourth Evangelist had drawn largely upon material which reached him in traditional form....There is singularly little in the relevant passages which bears any marks of the highly distinctive Johannine theology, and perhaps nothing at all which recalls the Hellenistic strain in it. On the other hand, we have noted several apparent points of contact with Jewish conditions, practices or modes of thought and language belonging to the first century. We are therefore encouraged to believe that we have before us something more than an imaginative construction serving dogmatic ends; that in fact this section of the gospel should be approached as a rendering - a somewhat free rendering it may be - of a tradition with a genuinely historical content."<sup>(223)</sup>

At the end of the discussion, Dodd offered a seven-point historical sketch of the work of the Baptist, whose preaching was characterised by an eschatology which stressed that a divine intervention was impending in which the

Messiah was to be the central figure, indeed, he was already present incognito. Jesus, a follower of John, soon started a more effective mission than him. John quickly accepted this, recognising Jesus as his superior, finally recognising him as the Messiah. Many of the Baptist's disciples naturally became the disciples of Jesus.<sup>(224)</sup> In this discussion Dodd allowed that the Baptist had some affinity with the thought of Qumran, those who accepted Dodd's conclusions echoed the words of Higgins, that they were "Important conclusions."<sup>(225)</sup>

We intend to take two 'soundings'. Our first is in what Vawter described as "The interesting discussion of 1.15 and 30."<sup>(226)</sup> If we understand  $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omicron\varsigma \mu\omicron\upsilon \eta\upsilon$  as "He existed before me", Dodd argued that it is very unlikely to have come from a tradition of the Baptist's sayings and would most likely be understood as a theological interpretation of the Evangelist. In his discussion of this phrase Dodd turned to the rest of the quotation which "Turns upon the antithesis,  $\delta\pi\omega\varsigma$ ,  $\epsilon\mu\pi\rho\omicron\sigma\theta\epsilon\nu$ . These are natural correlatives, meaning 'behind', 'in front of'. They develop a secondary temporal sense: 'after', 'before'."<sup>(227)</sup> He maintained that the only possible instances of this temporal sense in the New Testament is here and in the parallel passages Mark 1.7 and Matthew 3.11. Once more there is evidence here of Dodd's unitary understanding of the New Testament; why should New Testament usage, if there is any such, determine Johannine usage? Dodd knew that the local sense would not fit John 1.15; the meaning is in terms of rank. This, he admits, has no parallel in the New Testament but is common in secular Greek and there is a parallel in the LXX of Genesis 48.20 which expresses the precedence of Ephraim over Manasseh. Thus 1.15 means "He who comes after me has taken precedence over me". A more 'picturesque' way, to use Dodd's words, of expressing this is found in 1.27. As with his discussion of the background of the Gospel, so here Dodd feels free to cite New Testament, Septuagintal and secular Greek usage as he thinks appropriate. This still does not explain in what way Jesus is 'after' the Baptist. It was usually argued that it referred to later in time

and Dodd agreed that this was a natural understanding of the saying in the Synoptic tradition, but if that were so here, we have "An imperfect antithesis; ὀπίσω , 'after' in time, ἔμπροσθεν, 'before' in rank." (228) He conceded here that there may be a 'play on words' but he was impressed by the fact that this would then be the only occasion in the New Testament where ὀπίσω had a temporal sense. He suggested that when used with the genitive it refers "to the followers or adherents of the person named in the genitive." (229) He urged that "The expression in John 1.30, ὀπίσω μου ἔρχεται ἄνθρωπος would in any other context almost certainly be understood as meaning 'there is a man following me', that is, among my disciples or adherents." (230) He agreed that this meaning would be less suitable in 1.15 - but not by any means impossible - but, since 1.15 is securely embedded in a theological context, it is reasonable to assume that the natural meaning is contained in the narrative, 1.30, and may determine the meaning in 1.15. Dodd knew that πρῶτος μου ἦν may have had a metaphysical meaning for the Evangelist, but, it might originally have had a much simpler meaning. πρῶτος μου meaning 'my superior' while ἦν

"Might be, not the verb of existence, but the simple copula. The past tense could be understood as an instance of the well-established idiom in which it expresses 'a fact which is and always has been the same' ..... We may therefore translate 'There is a man in my following who has taken precedence of me, because he is and always has been essentially my superior!'" (231)

Dodd offered this interpretation as simply a possibility but there is doubt that he rated it highly. Here the argument turns in part upon an appeal to New Testament linguistic usage, and notably, in the discussion of the second phrase upon an appeal to an Aristotelian formula, "Τὸ τὸ ἦν εἶναι , used to express the essential nature of a thing, or 'a fact which is just recognised as such by the speaker or writer, having previously been denied, overlooked or not understood'." (232) Brown, in his commentary, dismissed this interpretation as 'elaborate' and it remains very open to

question whether the Evangelist's command of Greek would have been sufficient to have known this formula, and secondly, this is another instance of Dodd's appeal to different linguistic usage as it suits his argument.

Our second 'sounding' is in Dodd's interpretation of 1.20. This did not satisfy Pearson who argued that "His (Dodd's) interpretation of John 1.20 to mean 'He confessed Christ and did not deny him' is remarkably forced, particularly in view of the plain statement in 1.20b *καὶ ὁμολογήσεν ὅτι ἐγὼ οὐκ εἰμὶ ὁ Χριστός* . "(233) Dodd had argued that 1.20 was a peculiar way of expressing his meaning, not one that a Greek would naturally have used, but the clue is to be found in the

"Deep significance which the terms *ὁμολογεῖν* and *ἀρνεῖσθαι* have in the vocabulary of the New Testament, (so that) the expression John 1.20 would inevitably mean, for any Christian reader of the period, 'He confessed Christ and did not deny him.' In other words, the evangelist is claiming the Baptist as the first Christian 'confessor', in contrast to the view represented in the Synoptic Gospels that he was not 'in the Kingdom of God'. It is the Johannine view that has prevailed, and affected the liturgy and calendar of the Church." (234)

Dodd suggested that the situation in Ephesus, so far as we can reconstruct it from Acts 18.24-19.7, supports his interpretation since there "It was desired that the persons who had followed the Baptist should be regarded as adoptive members of the Church." (235) Quite apart from the fact that there are other possible understandings of the passage in the Acts of the Apostles we have here a good example of how John might well have worked up the tradition for a specific purpose, not indeed a polemic against a Baptist sect, but an invitation to them to do what their master had already done. Lindars offers a similar argument to Dodd, suggesting that the Evangelist "places the Baptist alongside the Christian martyrs," (236) whilst Brown sees signs of John's editorial activity.

Scholars were either very impressed, or they found considerable difficulties. Here, too, the recovery of the tradition is one thing, the

weighing of it another.

### The Sayings.

This is a one-hundred-and-five page examination of "Discourse and Dialogue in the Fourth Gospel", "Sayings common to John and the Synoptics", "Parabolic Forms", "Sequences of Sayings" and "Predictions". Our discussion will not be so detailed here, since in the attempt to place "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" in its Doddian context, articles which impinged upon the first three areas were discussed. Brown's summary accorded with the majority opinion; "In the last part of the book, Dodd turns to a painstaking investigation of the sayings common to John and the Synoptics (or at least, Synoptic patterns). The difficulty of explaining all the minor variants in John on the basis of a borrowing theory is insuperable."<sup>(237)</sup>

A brief overview of this part will be offered followed by 'soundings' in certain areas.

In the first section, "Discourse and Dialogue in the Fourth Gospel" Dodd repeated the arguments of "The Dialogue form in the Gospels", arguing that John's model is to be found in Hellenistic literature, and he added, in a footnote, that there was nothing like John's dialogues in the Dead Sea Scrolls.<sup>(238)</sup> Once he had asserted this, Dodd examined seven short dialogues which have some resemblance to Synoptic dialogues. Four of these- 6.67-70; 9.2-5; 7.3ff and 4.31-4.-have characteristics that "Point directly to contact with early forms of tradition,"<sup>(239)</sup> while two, 9.38-41 and 3.1-3, do so more remotely and he suggests that "John had at his disposal a tradition still partly fluid, not yet fully crystallised into fixed forms, which he could deal with as he chose."<sup>(240)</sup> From this base, Dodd moved to the suggestion that, even where the Johannine dialogue has no formal resemblance to those in the Synoptics, and where indeed it appears that John is composing most freely, we ought to consider seriously that "There is, sometimes, at least, an older tradition behind him."<sup>(241)</sup> This had been

demonstrated in "Behind a Johannine Dialogue".

The second section, "Sayings common to John and the Synoptics", is a repetition of "Some Johannine 'Herrenworte' with parallels in the Synoptic Gospels" and there is no need to comment here.

Reviewers were most fascinated by the discussion of "Parabolic Forms" in which Dodd discovered six parables, "The Grain of Wheat", 12.24, "The Pains of Childbirth", 16.21, "The Benighted Traveller", 11.9-10, "Slave and Son", 8.35, "The Shepherd, the Thief and the Doorkeeper", 10.1-5 and "Bridegroom and Bridegroom's Friend", 3.29, in which there is no possibility that John was dependent upon the Synoptic tradition. In each case there "Is good reason to believe that the material was drawn from the same reservoir of tradition as the Synoptic parables."<sup>(242)</sup> Dodd was contradicting some of his earlier statements in this discovery of genuine parables in the Fourth Gospel. As noted previously, he found one other parable - "The Apprenticed Son" - after his initial work in this area. Much modern scholarship has enthusiastically followed Dodd here. He did not always appear to be aware of how penetrating his work had been in the discovery of these parables.

The fourth section deals with sequences of sayings - 12.20-26; 13.1-20 and 4.31-8 - which resemble sequences in Mark 9.33-50, Luke 11.14-28 and 12.13-34. There is formal resemblance in that they contain strings of sayings rather loosely connected with each other and imperfectly related to their context. Again there is no possibility of dependence upon the Synoptics, rather they are "Drawn from the same reservoir of tradition as the kindred sayings in the Synoptics, though by a different channel."<sup>(243)</sup> Dodd found the primary Sitz im Leben for both the Johannine and Synoptic sequences in the Ministry of Jesus.<sup>(244)</sup>

The final section deals with the Predictions. These are discussed under two headings, "The Disciples and their Future" and "The Death of Christ and its Sequel". The former are more restricted in scope than those in the Synoptics and their Sitz im Leben can only be in a Jewish Christian

community fearing martyrdom and expulsion from the Synagogue.<sup>(245)</sup> This has implications for Dodd's understanding of the relationship of the Evangelist to the tradition; to this we shall turn later. Of the latter, Bligh's summary is accurate; "He (Dodd) thinks....that Jesus spoke of the future 'in broad general terms'. These as they passed out of the reservoir by one channel took on the futurist complexion of synoptic eschatology, and as used by John they offer a 'thoroughgoing reinterpretation' of the synoptic eschatology."<sup>(246)</sup> Dodd was impressed by the Johannine tradition;

"In a word, I suggest that John is here reaching back to a very early form of tradition indeed, and making it the point of departure for his profound theological reinterpretation; and further, that the oracular sayings which he reports have good claim to represent authentically, in substance if not verbally, what Jesus actually said to his disciples - a better claim than the more elaborate and detailed predictions which the Synoptics offer."<sup>(247)</sup>

Our first 'sounding' may be taken in this last area since it is very much concerned with the problem of eschatology in which Dodd's definitive stance had long been known. Indeed, it has already been considered in part in our discussion of the First Epistle, where we noted that Howard, among others, criticised his interpretation of Johannine eschatology. In this study Dodd had understood the sayings about the return of Jesus with reference to the Apostles eliminating any apocalyptic associations. Some reviewers had reservations; Wilder, whilst generally accepting Dodd's conclusions in this part of the book, wrote

"It is disturbing that the experience of Jesus' future return or manifestation is thus restricted to his disciples and that any cosmic or world-historical perspective is as good as excluded. One wonders how this fits with the author's emphasis on the political aspect of the historical Jesus in the Johannine tradition. One cannot but note also the congruence of this view with 'realised eschatology', in the sense of realization in the spiritual life of



the fellowship. But one notes again also the focus upon Christ and his person, upon Christology rather than eschatology. The consummation seems to be identified with Christ's return to his followers, or the coming of the Paraclete, rather than with his enthronement, or with his victory over the Prince of this world.

(12.31) We are accustomed to recognising the focus of the Fourth Gospel upon the life of the fellowship, as a special concern of the evangelist. Dodd seems to trace this back to Jesus himself."<sup>(248)</sup> Similarly Higgins, who was generally impressed by the book, observed "It is questionable whether Dodd is necessarily correct in preferring the Johannine predictions of the departure and return of Jesus to the more eschatological synoptic counterparts. More probably, at least to some extent, they owe their Johannine form to the purpose of restating the Gospel for his day and generation."<sup>(249)</sup> This was a common complaint, and on the strict application his method - that of carefully distinguishing recognisable Johannine theological insights - Dodd should have exercised more caution before concluding that the Johannine understanding was that of Jesus himself and had spared Jesus' teaching the apocalyptic development it received in the Synoptic tradition. We have already argued that Dodd's understanding would have benefited from an awareness of Aune's thesis in "The cultic setting of realised eschatology", that the community experienced a genuine, yet proleptic presence of the exalted Christ, and that this experience may have influenced the phrasing of the Christian hope.

The final 'sounding' will concern parables. Generally Dodd's work was welcomed, if for no other reason than that the absence of parables in the Fourth Gospel was something of an embarrassment to scholars and their presence a sure sign that John is in contact with primitive tradition. There was a regrettable tendency among certain scholars to welcome unreservedly this placing of the Fourth Gospel in something approaching the Synoptic context in which they moved so confidently. Hunter averred that "Dodd had no difficulty in recovering seven or eight true 'Parabolic' forms."<sup>(250)</sup>

He omitted to mention that this recovery involved Dodd in retracting conclusions and that no other scholar had succeeded in finding so many and that Dodd himself missed one significant one, that of "The Apprenticed Son". Very few were sceptical of Dodd's work here; Wikgren wrote of Dodd's "Striving to find some approximation to the Synoptics by identifying 'parabolic forms' as distinct from the allegorical."<sup>(251)</sup> He criticised Dodd for "Deserting his usual caution"<sup>(252)</sup> in citing six passages in which there "Is supposedly 'not the remotest likelihood of derivation from Synoptic sources'."<sup>(253)</sup> He suggested that

"Three of these are commonplace hardly requiring a 'tradition' to account for them particularly when Old Testament sources are also considered possible. To 12.24 (the seed), one may compare 1 Corinthians 15.36f, 1 Peter 1.23; to 16.21 (woman in travail), Romans 8.18-23, 1 Thessalonians 5.3, many Old Testament passages (for example Isaiah 13.8; 26.17; Micah 5.3f) and the Qumran Hodayoth; to 11.9 (day and night), Matthew 6.22f, Mark 4.21ff and parallels; Romans 2.19; 1 Thessalonians 5.5-8; Isaiah 50.10 and others, Job 12.25. In 10.1-5 there may well be reflections of the Lucan parable (15.1-7) and Matthew 7.13f, as also of such Septuagint passages as Micah 2.12f, Psalm 94 (95) 7, Ezekiel 34 et passim."<sup>(254)</sup>

This was a minority reaction and in fact does not disprove Dodd's contention unless one is going to abandon Dodd's entire methodology, as Wikgren suggests we should. He alluded to Goodwin's article which had demonstrated John's citation of the Old Testament from memory and rather loosely; "A similar use of Synoptic material would go far to explain the character of the text where it parallels the Synoptic Gospels."<sup>(255)</sup> Modern Johannine scholarship has, however, rightly followed Dodd at this point.

### Summary and Conclusions.

The analysis completed, Dodd argued for the existence of an independent Johannine tradition which is of considerable historical value.<sup>(256)</sup> This conclusion was welcomed by the vast majority of reviewers. We conclude this section with the opinion of two scholars who expressed serious reservations. Wikgren observed that

"The strength of the discussion, in its critical honesty and caution, tends to weaken the thesis and to leave one - at least this reader - with the impression that more often than not the data support the supposition that John knew and used one or more of the Synoptic Gospels, and that with few exceptions a putative tradition seems a more tenuous source for other items of authentic, historical character."<sup>(257)</sup>

Writing specifically of Dodd's discussion of the Johannine dialogue form, Beare argued "Only he would suggest that behind the Johannine (Hellenistic) form is it sometimes possible to discern an underlying dialogue cast in the traditional (Jewish) pattern."<sup>(258)</sup> Moreover, "These fragments of 'historical' tradition are embedded in a complex theological structure from which they can be recovered in any degree only by an extraordinary exhibition of critical virtuosity on the part of the researcher."<sup>(259)</sup> This final comment is apt for by no means all who rushed to embrace Dodd's conclusions so enthusiastically appreciated the critical acumen involved in recovering the Johannine tradition.

The Scope of the Study.

J. Bligh commented

"The first thing that strikes one about Professor Dodd's new book, 'Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel', is that it is a masterpiece of the printer's art. An aristocratic volume of 454 pages, nine and a half by six inches, weighing one pound thirteen ounces, its spine adorned with the illustrious name of C.H. Dodd and the Cambridge crest glittering in gold on navy blue, it seems destined to be described as 'monumental'. And yet, as one reads, something of the initial awe evaporates, for the author has set himself a surprisingly modest aim." (260)

Moreover, as we have seen, this aim was set as long ago as 1938. (261)

Bligh continued, having noted critically that the argument moved almost entirely on the literary level; "To some extent the title is misleading and the contents are just a little disappointing. Professor Dodd does not attempt to vindicate the historicity of the 'historical tradition' in the Fourth Gospel....his aim is to show the presence of an independent strain of tradition in John, not to test its reliability." (262) Recognising that Dodd saw his book in some relationship to the resumed "Quest of the historical Jesus", Bligh asked "Whether the limited conclusions which the author is satisfied to draw, even if accepted without reservation, will not in fact leave the 'quest of the historical Jesus' exactly where it stood before." (263) The truth of this judgement has been vindicated by the refusal of so many of the 'new questers' to use the Fourth Gospel. If Bligh's way of making his point was unexpected, nonetheless he had asked a very pertinent question of a work that had been twenty-five years in the coming and indeed at this point in the history of scholarship, when many had already begun to accept the possibility of an independent Johannine tradition, a discussion of the value of the Johannine tradition was needed.

Thus, to use Brown's words, "All that can be scientifically established from this study is that a considerable amount of the Johannine

material represents early tradition. That this early tradition accurately represents what Jesus said and did still remain to be established, although obviously, the earlier the tradition, the less chance of distortion."<sup>(264)</sup> Similarly, N. Perrin argued that Dodd had convincingly demonstrated that John is independent of the Synoptic Gospel and that he "Has used creatively an ancient oral tradition going back to Palestine before the destruction of Jerusalem"<sup>(265)</sup> but he warned, noting Dodd's predisposition towards regarding a Christian tradition as historical, "An ancient tradition is not necessarily an historical tradition."<sup>(266)</sup> It is interesting to note, that within Dodd's self-imposed limitation, there is very little in the study to justify 'Historical' in the title of the book. This adjective can properly be used here only in anticipation of his weighing the tradition and finding it historically reliable. As Beare warned

"In general, the value and interest of this Gospel surely lie in the developed theology of the Evangelist and not in such occasional fragments of actual verba Christi as may be uncovered by patient search. This is not to suggest that Professor Dodd himself fails to give due weight to these considerations. It is a caution, rather, to his readers against an over enthusiastic reversion to the historical approach to this Gospel. British scholarship has an unquenchable longing for brute historical and biographical fact, and there is the perpetual danger that the wish may give birth to the persuasion that the facts are more readily ascertainable than is actually the case."<sup>(267)</sup>

None of the British reviews show evidence of this weakness, although it was to be true of some of the more popular 'new look' publications, and indeed true of Dodd in "The Founder of Christianity" and "A Hidden parable in the Fourth Gospel" where he moved on, quite unjustifiably, to the reminiscences of Jesus in the carpenter's shop.

Other scholars were satisfied by the scope of Dodd's study;

I.H. Marshall happily went back to Gardner-Smith's work with its three points

1) the challenge to the notion of John's dependence on the Synoptics, 2) the suggestion that all the evangelists might have drawn on the common store of tradition and 3) the possibility of regarding the Fourth Gospel "As an independent authority for the life of Jesus, or at least of the traditions current in the Christian Church in the second half of the first century."<sup>(268)</sup> Marshall noted that a number of scholars had accepted part of Gardner-Smith's thesis "But the key question of the relation of John to the Synoptics has not yet been firmly settled"<sup>(269)</sup>, Marshall argued, as others did, that

"Dr. Dodd has placed points (1) and (2) of Mr. Gardner-Smith's thesis on a much more solid foundation. The further extremely important problem (3) of weighing and assessing the value of this source of early tradition as a witness to the actual life and teaching of Jesus, wies eigentlich geschehen ist, is not discussed (except very briefly) by Dr. Dodd, who is content to leave that task to other scholars working on the basis of the evidence he has collected. And content he may well be."<sup>(270)</sup>

However, in a book the size of "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel", one might have expected either no assessment of the recovered tradition or a thorough assessment. Tantalisingly in this book, Dodd had valued highly the Johannine tradition where it supported his own theological and critical position. This is a significant weakness of the study. This study did not convince all scholars of John's independence from the Synoptics. The classical example is Barrett, who is as convinced in the second edition of his commentary as he was in the first, that John is dependent upon Mark at least.

Grant argued that the supreme value of Dodd's work was in its being an exhaustive account of the tradition behind the Fourth Gospel, at least that part of it that has any resemblance to the tradition known to us through the Synoptics. This concession is also significant in that there is much that has no such resemblance. Grant suggested that "It is certain to inaugurate a new age in Johannine studies."<sup>(271)</sup> That is not so; that

age had dawned long ago. What it did was to lend massive support to the endeavour that partly characterised that age, and it was a child of that age. Higgins' "The Historicity of the Fourth Gospel" is also a product of that new age. It is a much smaller book, embodying but the substance of two lectures. Its coverage is not so detailed as that in "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" and it probably would not have been published after that book, but in some ways it is a much more acute work than Dodd's massive study. Higgins observed how unsatisfactory our portrait of Jesus would be if we only had the Fourth Gospel, -a point that Dodd unsuccessfully tried to answer as we have seen - yet neither did he exaggerate the similarities or differences. Higgins suggested that the Gospel was written for believers. Like Dodd, he maintained that the Fourth Gospel "Is both Jewish, because of the Palestinian background of its tradition, and Greek because of the environment in which it was moulded as a finished product."<sup>(272)</sup> Higgins has a more adequate understanding of the possible relationship of the Gospel to Qumran; "Clear and undoubted common background of thought and language."<sup>(273)</sup> The major part of Higgins' work is a study of two narratives, 4.46-54 and chapter 6. Using the same method as Dodd, he reached identical conclusions;

"The similarities of the two passages from John discussed above are not great enough to support the contention that they are mere borrowings from Luke and Matthew and Mark respectively. If, on the contrary, they are the deposits of traditions in no way basically inferior, and even in some points superior to the Synoptic parallels, the presumption is that the other narratives, unrepresented in the other gospels, were also derived from trustworthy tradition."<sup>(274)</sup>

In a chapter entitled "John against the Synoptics", while certainly not oblivious to the problems of the Johannine narrative, Higgins is favourably impressed by the Johannine account of the Baptist, the visits of Jesus to Jerusalem, the Passion Narrative and topographical information. Whilst he agreed that in terms of its publication as a finished document, John's

Gospel was indeed the fourth, in terms of the tradition underlying it, it was not necessarily so. Higgins did not underestimate the difficulty of recovering the Johannine tradition; he suggested that the task is hazardous "Yet it is not a completely hopeless one, especially when there are embedded in the discourses sayings resembling Synoptic utterances."<sup>(275)</sup> His discussion overlapped at some points with Dodd's discussion of Johannine Herrenworte; he concluded "That sayings like these belong to a tradition which preserved them in a closely similar though not identical form to their Synoptic counterparts, rather than that they are simply borrowings and adaptations by the evangelist."<sup>(276)</sup> Higgins was impressed by Dodd's argument in "According to the Scriptures" which had demonstrated John's independent yet traditional use of testimonies. Thus Higgins argued that John is

"Independent of all the Synoptic Gospels, but is familiar with traditions at points similar to theirs, and with wholly different traditions....The 'high' or 'advanced' theology could be accounted for by the intellectual climate in which the Gospel originated.... The sources or traditions used by the Fourth Evangelist deserve at least as much respect as those employed by the Synoptics."<sup>(277)</sup>

Higgins would not want to compare his work with Dodd's. Nonetheless he had achieved in a short compass what Dodd had exhaustively demonstrated and shown himself more aware of the problems of assessing and using the Johannine tradition. It is unfortunate that Dodd only used this tradition in the popular "The Founder of Christianity" but, as we have argued, his use of it there begs many questions and suggests that Dodd was not the one to weigh the tradition.



Dodd's Understanding of the Johannine Tradition.

It is no overstatement to suggest that in places Dodd had as satisfactory a picture of the tradition and its role in the Church as any British scholar. Very early in his career he wrote "The writer (of the Fourth Gospel) was probably himself not of the first Christian generation, but in the communal life of the Church at Ephesus, to which he belonged, he stood in the centre of a living tradition going back to very early days, and very likely preserving much authentic reminiscences of the first witnesses to Christ."<sup>(278)</sup> Five years later he added "It does give us some important facts found nowhere else."<sup>(279)</sup> The early tradition was oral tradition with a perspective;

"The recognition of the continuity of oral tradition has been accompanied by the recognition that, just because it was so vitally related to the whole life of an active community, it has been shaped and coloured by the conditions, interests and needs of various groups within the community at different times. Among its other contents, statements about the life and teaching of Jesus bear the stamp of the varying 'Sitz im Leben', or 'setting in life' within which the tradition was formed and had currency."<sup>(280)</sup>

He insisted that the period of oral tradition continued beyond the New Testament period.<sup>(281)</sup> This understanding of tradition in theory allowed Dodd to conceive of the tradition as having a Sitz im Leben in the Ministry of Jesus and another in the life of the Church. Yet Dodd never proposed a 'Sitz im Leben' in the Church later than 70 A.D. and was generally concerned only to find the Sitz im Leben in the Ministry of Jesus. Occasionally he did propose a Sitz im Leben in a Jewish Christian community facing martyrdom or expulsion from the Synagogue.<sup>(282)</sup> Right at the end of "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel", Dodd conceded the possibility of written tradition;

"That some parts of it may have been written down by way of aide-memoire is always possible, and such written sources may have

intervened between the strictly oral traditions and our Fourth Gospel. If so, I am not concerned with them: I am trying to discover where, if at all, the finished work still betrays the existence and character of the oral tradition upon which, directly or through the medium of written memoranda, it depends."<sup>(283)</sup>

It is not easy to see what is being conceded here. and the point demands clarification. It might conceivably be the restoration of an earlier interest in written sources behind the Fourth Gospel. Dodd, however, did maintain a distinction between two forms of the tradition. There is a fixed form by which the Evangelist is 'bound' and "A tradition still partly fluid, not yet fully crystallised into fixed forms, which he could deal with as he chose."<sup>(284)</sup> The fixed form of the tradition may be compared to a reservoir - Dodd's description - with a number of streams or ducts flowing from it. It may well be that the concept of a reservoir suggests something too organised, too regulated (depending upon one's understanding of a reservoir) and in this respect, Manson's understanding of 'standing' pools or lakes of tradition is to be preferred. Moreover, since in the fluid stage the tradition was "An unarticulated wealth of recollections or reminiscences of the words and deeds of Jesus.....a host of remembered traits and turns of expression, often disjointed and without context but abounding in characteristic details,"<sup>(285)</sup> is it possible to recover and describe this tradition? It appears that such an attempt can only be made once certain substances have crystallised and in that case are we not really talking of Johannine tradition with all it implies? The tradition behind the Fourth Gospel, it is frequently asserted, is both ancient and historically reliable.<sup>(286)</sup> One oddity within his understanding is. that on one occasion the tradition can embrace what is essentially non-Christian and Hellenistic; we have noted this in the discussion of the first miracle.<sup>(287)</sup> The only significance we note here is. that in the interests of an understanding of the origin and purpose of the Gospel the picture of tradition can be stretched and strained.

Dodd's understanding of the nature of tradition underwent a radical change in "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" where he suggested one that was utterly at odds with his previous one. Indeed, the understanding of tradition within this book is contradictory. In contrast to the dynamic tradition we have a fossilised one, locked away for many years. In fact, the lack of interest of this moribund tradition for an Ephesian community right at the end of the first century is more than once used as an argument to support the authenticity and reliability of the Johannine tradition. Robinson pressed Dodd at this point; in his "Redating the New Testament", he has conclusively demonstrated that Dodd thought that the Evangelist had an "External and second hand relation" to his tradition;<sup>(288)</sup> "It is a curiously passive relationship".<sup>(289)</sup> Dodd "Speaks of the tradition on which he 'depended', which he is 'following' or 'drawing on', as material that 'came into his hands' in the form of 'information received', which he then 'took over', 'made use of' and 'worked upon' to his own purpose."<sup>(290)</sup> Robinson drew attention to the fact the "Presupposition is that he (the Evangelist) was 'incorporating material which, at a distance of place and time, he did not fully understand'".<sup>(291)</sup> The distance envisaged by Dodd is a considerable one so that "One may well ask why it should have been to this remote and neglected quarry that the evangelist went for his information or why he should have chosen to take it as 'a starting point for his theological adventure' when his own interests and those of his public were so confessedly different."<sup>(292)</sup> However, this is not the major problem which Robinson sees;

"But what needs greatest explanation is the gap in the history of the material itself. For it bears all the marks of having been shaped in Jewish Christian circles in Judaea, very much in touch with the synagogue, prior to the rebellion of 66 - and then to have suffered from an extended period of cultural isolation and arrested development until it was reused in Hellenistic circles in Asia Minor in the 90s."<sup>(293)</sup> Robinson's question must be asked; "If it was locked away for half a century, how and where did

it survive in this crystallised condition, with those 'almost forgotten elements in the background of the story which made it at that time so significant for the immediate followers of Jesus'?"<sup>(294)</sup> Robinson saw three ways out of the problem. The first would involve a denial of Dodd's thesis that there is an ancient tradition behind the Fourth Gospel, the second would bridge the gap in terms of something like Brown's well known five-stage model of the compilation of the Gospel, and the third denies that the Gospel is so late that there is any gap to bridge. These theories cannot be evaluated here, but Dodd's understanding of the tradition and the Evangelist's relationship to it is patently very unsatisfactory. This understanding seems to spring from his picture of the Evangelist and of the purpose of the Gospel, formed so long ago. Dodd apparently could not adapt these to the results of his later work and the result is an antinomy in Dodd's understanding of tradition. Dodd frequently suggests a special case to remove a difficulty but in this instance, as in others, it presents yet more difficulties than it solves. In the final analysis Dodd's picture of the tradition will not bear the weight that it must for his theory to hold. In the end all that he had so massively demonstrated here, he had suggested very early in his career and he was still not prepared to ask - and in fact never did - the vital questions.

Dodd's understanding of tradition as dynamic, and with a perspective calls into question part of his methodology. This was seen by a number of the reviewers. Wilder warned that

"Even 'primitive' tradition, whether Johannine or synoptic, can be misleading if we fail to recognise that the retrospective interest in the person of Jesus represents a changed perspective. The whole reservoir of primitive tradition, narrative and sayings, upon which the four gospels are built had already been radically reshaped by the translation of the earliest witnesses into various expressions and forms of Christological piety and faith.." <sup>(295)</sup>

Marshall also noted that John remembered and wrote "In the context of

church life."<sup>(296)</sup> Brown wondered whether the elimination of all possible Johannine theological elements was not a severe weakness; "Have we any real evidence that the historical tradition in the Fourth Gospel was ever preached bereft of its theological interpretation? Is it not possible that the blend of history and theology that Dodd sees in the final composition took place all along the line in Johannine circles?"<sup>(297)</sup> Brown knew that Dodd thought this unlikely, but "Dodd believes that this tradition has evolved and that it has many characteristics like those of the Synoptic tradition, which is more or less a product of corporate experience."<sup>(298)</sup> Marshall too, asked "What becomes of Dr. Dodd's distinction between tradition and interpretation?"<sup>(299)</sup> Dodd had made too hard and fast a distinction and one that is not tenable.

Thus Wikgren posed the vital double question; "Is the posited, historical tradition reliable? Is it reliable as communicated through a composition of the character of the Fourth Gospel?"<sup>(300)</sup> Dodd had long regarded the Christian tradition as one that must contain reliable historical information. In this belief he was followed by many scholars and Hunter argued that the implication of Dodd's study "Makes the historicity of the Fourth Gospel the liveliest issue in New Testament studies today."<sup>(301)</sup> Others were not convinced; Beare wrote

"Professor Dodd has greatly strengthened the case for taking the Fourth Gospel seriously as a quarry for historical facts concerning Jesus of Nazareth. I am left with the feeling that when its evidence has been sifted and weighed, it does not add greatly to the meagre store of facts which are supplied by the Synoptics. Where it differs from them, it is not to be automatically ruled out of consideration....But I wonder if the total effect of this investigation may not be misleading in that it does not take into account the unreality of the general picture of Jesus in this Gospel."<sup>(302)</sup>

One final methodological weakness may be commented on. Only part of the Johannine tradition can be evaluated, that with Synoptic affinities

but "In the course of the long discourses especially, there is much that is peculiarly Johannine. For that we have no scientific basis on which we may definitely decide what is truly a reflection of ancient tradition."<sup>(303)</sup> This is not necessarily a grave weakness, but it demands that Kysar's questions be put; "Exactly how rich and creative was the pre-literary history of the gospel material? How varied and numerous were traditions? How localised were they?"<sup>(304)</sup> Dodd, as Kysar suggests, "Understands the pre-literary tradition as preservative rather than disruptive of the unity of the Christian message."<sup>(305)</sup> The implication is that, even where we cannot check it, the Johannine tradition is reliable but implicitly there is the understanding that the Synoptic tradition is more concerned with the strictly historically and is more reliable in this area for otherwise there would be no need to use it as the 'yardstick' by which the Johannine is discussed.

Dodd's understanding of tradition is ultimately contradictory. There is an unbridgeable gap between his early understanding and that adopted in "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel". His early understanding was correct, but this has been 'jettisoned' in order to retain a picture of the evangelist. Moreover, this early understanding, with its insistence that the early Church "Did its business in the world primarily through the medium of the living voice, in worship, teaching and missionary preaching, and out of these three forms of activity-liturgy, didache, kerygma - a tradition was built up"<sup>(306)</sup>, rendered untenable the distinction that Dodd made between tradition and interpretation and demanded that he ask the questions that he postponed for ultimately it seems impossible that a tradition be recovered without assessment of that putative tradition being an integral part of the recovery process.

Concluding observations.

Throughout "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" Dodd's investigation was primarily concerned with questions of literary dependence. There is a distinction to be made between the literary dependence or independence of a passage and its historical worth. Recently, D.A. Carson has argued that Dodd "Repeatedly turns the literary inquiry into historical considerations."<sup>(307)</sup> He asserts that "Such literary concerns are essentially little more than Dodd's method for tackling historical questions."<sup>(308)</sup> Carson has overstated his case but he has drawn our attention to significant problems for Dodd once he ventured any judgment of historical probability of the Johannine strain of the tradition that he had recovered. We have already argued that Dodd should not have attempted any such judgments in this book. Once Dodd had, he should have asked "How the problem of synoptic/fourth gospel literary relationship and the problem of the historical trustworthiness of the fourth gospel should properly be related."<sup>(309)</sup> Dodd never apparently asked this question.

Ultimately Dodd's position seems to be ideological rather than methodological. He had always maintained that Christianity was an historical religion and that a Christian Gospel and the tradition underlying it were concerned to present historical facts about Jesus. He moved to the position that the most mature presentation of the Gospel in the Fourth Gospel was based on the most historically reliable presentation of those facts. This position is to be seen in "The Founder of Christianity".

Goodwin posed another significant question. What does it mean to say that John knows the Synoptics? Dodd assumes that this implies that John had the Synoptics before him in written form. Frequently the argument takes a form similar to this, "We ask, first, what motive John could have had for altering this at all."<sup>(310)</sup> Carson asks "Might not the

dependency be there, in the sense that John had read, pondered, and even partly memorized the synoptics (or one or two of them) and then decided to write his own book?"<sup>(311)</sup> Goodwin had argued some twenty-five years ago that this was precisely how John had used the Old Testament. If this were so, a measure of dependency exists but there would be no way in which such dependency could be proved, not least because "John is, linguistically speaking, remarkably uniform."<sup>(312)</sup> Dodd may have posed an invalid antithesis; either John is independent or he has 'capriciously' and 'inexplicably' made changes from the Synoptic narratives.<sup>(313)</sup> Carson asks pertinently "Why not the far simpler theory, that John wrote his own book, in his own style, with his own themes? It happens every day...If the fourth evangelist had access to all sorts of excellent information, in addition to the synoptics, what is implausible about the suggestion that he freely composed his own book?"<sup>(314)</sup> If this is so, one of Dodd's key methodological tools is no longer of such value; "To appeal to Johannine theology, or even to Johannine drama, is not itself an adequate basis for separating out the historical from the later accretion."<sup>(315)</sup>

Thus serious methodological questions may be asked of Dodd's whole endeavour. There were other questions of a less serious nature.

"Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" owed very little to the work of other scholars. Brown was one of very few to criticise this, "It is a brilliant tour de force to write a work such as this from one's own study of the Gospels without giving much attention to other literature on the subject....Nevertheless so much has been written on John that we may ask if one can really afford to do this solo work. For many individual passages in John treated in this book the reviewer can name articles which are better than Dodd's treatment and from which Dodd's general thesis would have benefited."<sup>(316)</sup>

This could have been said of almost any book that Dodd wrote. There was



not apparently a dialogue between Dodd and the rest of the Johannine scholarly world. They showed much awareness of his work and he but little of theirs. Many of the works that Dodd reviewed so appreciatively have ultimately influenced him little.

Secondly, Dodd's discussion of the Dead Sea Scrolls was inadequate. Hunter noted this; "One surprise only have I had - Dodd's declared inability to 'discern close and striking affinity between the Fourth Gospel and the literature of Qumran'."<sup>(317)</sup> Hunter did not argue the case in his review but there was a general recognition of their importance at this time. Dodd referred to the Scrolls on just six occasions. Dodd, in his review of Bernard's commentary, severely criticised him for ignoring the Hellenistic background; the same criticism might, as appropriately, be made of an author who in this period ignored the potential importance of Qumran.<sup>(318)</sup> A small minority welcomed Dodd's stance: Bligh suggested "No doubt some of the Megillomaniacs will take him to task for this, but before doing so they ought to attempt to demonstrate the alleged affinity."<sup>(319)</sup> Even though the second edition of Barrett's commentary may appear to have rehabilitated Dodd's stance, this was a severe and important weakness, precisely because he was attempting to recover an ancient tradition with a southern Palestinian background, even if that for him meant mostly one with an interest in Jerusalem.

"Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" was not so unambiguously received as "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel". This was in no small way due to the scholarly world wanting the book that Dodd had not written, the attempt to place the Johannine tradition "Firmly in its total historical environment by the use of all the available evidence."<sup>(320)</sup> Shortly many studies were to be published attempting the task that Dodd had postponed. The time for such studies was here. A number of reviewers mentioned this; for example, Simon,

"About the indication peculiar to the Fourth Gospel, but repeated three times (3.22, 3.26 and 4.1) that Jesus was baptizing, the

author suggests that 'here we are dealing with an undigested scrap of genuine information'. As for the addition in 4.2 (though Jesus himself baptised not, but his disciples), he sees in it 'the work of a subsequent redactor, who took exception to the idea that Jesus was (as it were) a second Baptist'. The argument could, it seems, just as well be reversed; to one so deeply concerned with the sacramental nature of Christianity as the author of the Fourth Gospel, it would indeed be a most welcome opportunity to be able to trace the origins of Christian Baptism to Jesus himself."<sup>(321)</sup>

At so many points Dodd's study suggested the need for the quest of the Johannine community.

One oddity was that the book did not enjoy in some periodicals lengthy reviews by experts. This was in marked contrast to "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel".<sup>(322)</sup> Most would have accepted Grant's verdict that "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" was "One of the great achievements of New Testament scholarship."<sup>(323)</sup> Many welcomed the change it implied in the Bultmannian and post-Bultmannian understanding of the Fourth Gospel.<sup>(324)</sup> In short, more so than perhaps for any of his major works, attitudes varied depending upon the reviewer's own approach to Johannine studies and in particular upon what each was looking for in the Fourth Gospel.

# References - Chapter VI.

1. of G.B. Caird, Charles Harold Dodd, p.9, and J.A.T. Robinson, Theologians of our time, Exp. Tim., 75, 1963-64; cited from the book of that title, p.41.
2. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.8.
3. This information was provided in a letter from the Rev. G.M. Styler, who was secretary of the Cambridge New Testament Seminar.
4. of e.g. The Gospel in the New Testament, p.75, with its claim that the Fourth Evangelist "Stood in the centre of a living tradition going back to very early days, and very likely preserving much authentic reminiscence of the first witnesses of Christ" and Bible and Background, p.75, where he averred "It (the Fourth Gospel) does give us some important facts found nowhere else".
5. This lecture was delivered at the University of Manchester as part of the Jubilee celebrations of the Faculty of Theology and published in B.J.R.L., 37, 1954, pp.54-67.
6. of Ibid. p.54, "Indeed the questions. What is the character of the tradition, How is this or that particular report integrated into the tradition, are questions which should be asked, and if possible answered, before we raise the further question 'How did it actually happen?'".
7. Ibid. p.57.
8. Ibid. p.60f.
9. of Ibid. p.61; the typical Johannine dialogues are those with Nicodemus on regeneration; with the Samaritan woman about living water; with the Galilaeans about the bread of life. The controversial dialogues are to be found in chapters 8-10 and in 13.31-14.31 about Christ's departure and return.
10. Ibid. p.63.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid. p.65.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid. p.66.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid. p.66f.
17. of Drummond, An Inquiry into the Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel, p.16f.
18. of Howard, Fourth Gospel, pp.267-70.
19. Dodd, Herrenworte, N.T.S., 2, 1955-56, pp.75-86.
20. Ibid. p.75.
21. Ibid.

22. Ibid. p.77f.
23. Ibid. p.81.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid. p.86.
26. cf Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.424, implied in this article p.75.
27. For example, in B. Gerhardsson in Memory and Manuscript; oral transmission and written transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity, 1961, and H. Riesenfeld, The Gospel tradition, 1970. Both scholars' views were well known before the publication of their respective works, Riesenfeld's views exercising considerable influence since his lecture to the International Congress on the Gospels at Oxford in 1957.
28. Dodd, The appearance of the risen Christ: an essay in form criticism of the Gospels, in Studies in the Gospels, edited by D.E. Nineham, pp.102-33.
29. Ibid. p.116.
30. Ibid. p.133; Dodd did not discuss this case in H.T.F.G., either.
31. Ibid. p.121.
32. Ibid. p.133.
33. Dodd, A l'arrière-plan d'un dialogue Johannique, Revue d' Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses, 37, 1957, pp.5-17, reprinted in More New Testament studies, M.U.P., 1968, pp.41-57, from which all citations are taken.
34. cf Ibid. p.41. The Johannine dialogue is an original literary creation, having in some respects more affinity with Hellenistic models than with the dialogues of the Synoptic Gospels or their Rabbinic analogues".
35. P. Borgen, Bread from Heaven; an exegetical study of the concept of manna in the Gospel of John and the writings of Philo, Leiden, 1965.
36. Dodd, Dialogue, p.41.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid. p.42.
39. Ibid. p.44.
40. Ibid. p.45.
41. Ibid. p.47.
42. Ibid. p.48.
43. Ibid. p.52.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.

46. Ibid. p.53.
47. Ibid. p.54.
48. The examples cited are Matthew 8.11-22; Luke 16.24-25.
49. Dodd, Dialogue, p.56f.
50. cf Ibid. p.47 for the footnote.
51. Ibid. p.48.
52. cf R.E. Brown, Other Sheep not of this Fold, J.B.L., 97, 1978, pp.5-22 where he identified six groups in some sort of relationship with John's Church, including "The Jewish Christians" of inadequate faith; his methodology is superior to Dodd's in that the analysis is based on the text of the Fourth Gospel with no presuppositions about the necessity of comparing John's situation with that of others known from the New Testament.
53. J.A.T. Robinson, The destination and purpose of St. John's Gospel, N.T.S., 6, 1960, pp.117-131; all citations from reprint in Twelve,
54. Ibid. p.115.
55. Ibid.
56. Dodd, Une parabole cachée dans le quatrième Evangile, in Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses, 42, 1962; all quotations from the English edition, A hidden Parable in the Fourth Gospel, in More New Testament Studies, M.U.P., 1968.
57. Bultmann had recognised the parable of the Bridegroom and Bridegroom's Friend, the Slave and the Son, and the Benighted Traveller. For Robinson's discussion see Twelve, pp.67-76.
58. Dodd, Hidden Parable, p.32.
59. Ibid. p.39.
60. Ibid. p.40.
61. Dodd, The Prophecy of Caiaphas: John 11.47-53 in Neotestamentica et Patristica, edited by W.C. Van Unnik, Leiden, 1962, all page references to reprint in More New Testament Studies, pp.58-68.
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63. Ibid. p.59.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid. p.61.
67. The passages cited are, 4.28-29, 41-42; 7.40.52 and 11.56-57; as Dodd indicated the dissimilarity is as significant as any similarity for in the last two there is a judgement made upon Jesus by Jewish authorities.
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69. Ibid.
70. Ibid. p.62f.
71. Ibid. p.63.
72. Ibid. p.65.
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85. Brown, Review of H.T.F.G., in T.S., 25, 1964, p.430.
86. Brown, After etc., p.29, a similar point was made by A.J.B. Higgins in The words of Jesus according to St. John, B.J.R.L., 49, 1966-67.
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92. Ibid. p.121.
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106. Ibid. p.97f.
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113. cf Ibid. p.5, where with specific reference to the essays of R.E. Brown and W.D. Davies, Stendahl wrote, "It has often been said that the Dead Sea Scrolls add substantially to our knowledge of the Jewish background of Christianity. On this point there is universal agreement. This is significant enough. It means, among other things, that both the Pauline and the Johannine literature can be understood in their Jewish background and that means that many of the odysseys of scholars of some decade ago over the deep waters of Hellenistic philosophy and religion were more fascinating than they were rewarding".
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118. These were truth and perversity, brotherly love, fountain of living waters, apostasy, seasons and festivals, purifications and baptisms and finally messianism.
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120. Ibid. p.205f.
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124. O. Cullmann, The Johannine Circle, S.C.M., 1976.
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127. O. Cullmann, A new approach to the interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p.8.
128. cf O. Cullmann, The significance of the Qumran texts for research into the beginnings of Christianity, p.31, where verse 18 of chapter 10 is held to be significant "As it clearly distinguished Jesus' work from that of the martyred prophet: 'No one takes my life: I lay it down of my own accord'. The emphasis with which this is said makes clear that Jesus' death is being interpreted in intentional contrast to another conception".
129. Robinson, Twelve, p.26.



130. Ibid. p.99f; this was a conclusion that has been accepted by many, e.g. Smalley, John, p.33, "...The overlap between the Scrolls and the Fourth Gospel is supremely important for our purposes of examining the nature of John's tradition. For it demonstrates excitingly what has already been guessed from the literary evidence, that a setting and even a date for the tradition behind John's Gospel can be provided which is much closer to the origins of Christianity than had previously been thought possible".
131. Ibid. p.100.
132. Ibid. p.103, cf e.g. Dodd, Interpretation, p.447.
133. E.R. Goodenough, John, a primitive Gospel, J.B.L., 64, 1945, pp.145-82.
134. Ibid. p.147; he argued that the Gospel was a primitive product from the early church and adduced in support John's ignorance of the Virgin birth, his lack of knowledge of the institution of the Eucharist and his independence of the Synoptics - though he came to know of Gardner-Smith's work after his article was completed, and as the first footnote shows, he was somewhat embarrassed by this.
135. R. Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition, Exp. Tim. 1963.
136. Robinson, Twelve, p.105.
137. Ibid. p.106.
138. Ibid.
139. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.8.
140. Ibid. p.9.
141. A. Wilder, Review of H.T.F.G., J.B.L., 83, 1964, pp.303-06.
142. A. Wikgren, Review of H.T.F.G., Interpretation, 20, 1966, pp.234-35. Higgins suggested that parts of the book were almost a commentary on the Fourth Gospel.
143. A.M. Hunter, Review of H.T.F.G., Exp. Tim., 75, 1963-64, p.146f.
144. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.21.
145. Ibid. p.22.
146. Ibid. p.31.
147. Ibid. p.36.
148. F.W. Beare, Review of H.T.F.G., N.T.S., 10, 1964-65, pp.517-22.
149. cf Ibid. p.519, where Beare argued that "The evidence for the use of the Suffering Servant passages is singularly thin, and afford no support for the widely held theory that it entered into the primitive understanding of the Passion". In 1959 M.D. Hooker published Jesus and the Servant.
150. Hunter, p.146.

151. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.60.
152. Ibid. p.61f.
153. Ibid. p.63.
154. Dodd, History and the Gospel, p.27.
155. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.79.
156. Ibid. p.80.
157. Ibid.
158. Ibid.
159. Ibid.
160. Ibid. p.75.
161. Ibid.
162. Ibid.
163. Ibid. p.76.
164. Ibid.
165. Ibid.
166. Ibid.
167. Ibid. p.81.
168. Ibid.
169. Ibid. p.145.
170. Ibid. p.128.
171. Simon, Review of H.T.F.G., J.T.S., 18, 1967, pp.189-92.
172. In respect of chapter 4 and the Passion narrative Dodd was followed by Brown.
173. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.150.
174. B. Vawter was one of few to criticise Dodd at this point. In his review in C.B.Q., 26, 1964, he wrote "He persists in finding no theological significance in the figure of the woman at the Cross" and referred to "Dodd's stubborn determination to see no reference to the Passover Lamb in John", both quotations from p.370.
175. M.I. Williams, Tradition in the Fourth Gospel: a critique of C.H. Dodd, Studia Evangelica, 4, 1967, pp.259-68, p.261.
176. Ibid. p.261f.
177. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.98.
178. Williams, op cit p.261f.

179. cf Dodd, Interpretation, p.431f.
180. viz. "Prelude to the Passion", "Stories of healing", "The feeding of the multitude and contiguous matter", "The miracle of the wine and the raising of Lazarus" and "Transitional passages and topographical notices".
181. cf e.g. Brown, review of H.T.F.G., in TS 25, 1964, p.431, "Once again there is no rational way in which the peculiarities of the Johannine narratives can be explained from a reshuffling of the Synoptic accounts".
182. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.233.
183. Ibid. p.233f.
184. Ibid. p.234, citing Nineham's comment from Studies in the Gospels.
185. Ibid. p.243; the 'authentic' transitional passages are, 2.12; 3.22-23; 4.1-3; 4.43-45; 7.1-2; 10.40-42 and 11.54.
186. Ibid.
187. Higgins, Historicity, p.78; this value judgment was offered of Dodd's arguments in Interpretation, which were identical to those in H.T.F.G.
188. cf Interpretation, p.452f. "All attempts that have been made to extract a profound symbolical meaning out of the names of Sychar, the city of Ephraim, Bethany beyond Jordan, Aenon-by-Salim, of Cana and Tiberias, or again of Kedron, Bethesda (or Bethzatha) and Gabbatha are hopelessly fanciful; and there is no reason to suppose that a fictitious topography would in any way assist the appeal of the gospel to an Ephesian public".
189. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.246.
190. Ibid. p.241.
191. Simon, (Review), p.191.
192. Moffatt, Introduction, p.550; other scholars argue from the accuracy of the topography to the accuracy of John's scheme of visits to Jerusalem.
193. cf Ibid.
194. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.238, footnote 1.
195. Ibid.
196. W.A. Meeks, Galilee and Judea in the Fourth Gospel, J.B.L., 85, 1966, 159-66.
197. Ibid. p.159.
198. cf Dodd, Interpretation, p.91.
199. cf Barrett, Commentary, I and II, ad loc and Dodd, Interpretation p.91.
200. Meeks, op cit p.162.

201. Ibid. p.163.
202. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.238.
203. Ibid. p.240f.
204. Meeks, op cit p.165.
205. Ibid.
206. Ibid.
207. Ibid. referring to Dodd, Interpretation, p.351f
208. Dodd, H.T.F.G. p.238.
209. Meeks, op cit p.167.
210. Higgins, Historicity, pp.22-39, quotation p.39.
211. cf J. Bligh, C.H. Dodd on John and the Synoptics, Heythrop Journal, 5, 1964, pp.276-96.
212. Lindars, Commentary, ad loc.
213. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.227.
214. Ibid. p.228. An explanation in some ways similar to Dodd's is Lindars' who argues that verse 10 "Not only preserves the conclusion of a genuine parable of Jesus, but also comprises it almost in its entirety", Commentary, p.128.
215. Ibid. p.225.
216. Ibid.
217. Beare, p.519.
218. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.232.
219. Lindars, Commentary, p.386.
220. For a position very similar to Dodd cf Higgins, Historicity, p.42.
221. Brown, p.431.
222. Pearson, Review of H.T.F.G., in Vigilae Christianae, 21, 1967, p.129, Turner and Simon also queried Dodd at this point.
223. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.288f.
224. cf Ibid. p.300f.
225. Higgins, Review of H.T.F.G., S.J.T., 17, 1964, pp.359-62.
226. Vawter, p.369.
227. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.272.
228. Ibid. p.273.
229. Ibid.

230. Ibid. p.274.
231. Ibid.
232. Ibid. citing Goodwin, Moods and Tenses of the Greek verb, 1889, p.13.
233. Pearson, p.129.
234. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.299.
235. Ibid. p.300.
236. Lindars, Commentary, ad loc.
237. Brown, p.431.
238. of Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.321.
239. Ibid. p.239.
240. Ibid.
241. Ibid. p.334.
242. Ibid. p.385; this was said specifically of "The Shepherd, the Thief and the Doorkeeper"; similar judgments were offered of the parables considered.
243. Ibid. p.404.
244. cf Ibid. p.404f.
245. cf Ibid. p.413.
246. Bligh, op cit p.282.
247. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.420.
248. Wilder, p.305f.
249. Higgins, p.362.
250. Hunter, p.147.
251. Ibid.
252. Ibid.
253. Ibid.
254. Ibid.
255. Ibid.
256. of Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.423.
257. Wikgren, p.238.
258. Beare, p.520.

259. Ibid. p.521, a position very similar to that of Barrett in the second edition of his commentary.
260. Bligh, op cit p.276.
261. cf Dodd, History and the Gospel, p.80.
262. Bligh, op cit p.276.
263. Ibid. p.276f
264. Brown, p.432.
265. N. Perrin, Review of H.T.F.G. In Journal of Religion, 44, 1964, p.335.
266. Ibid.
267. Beare, p.521.
268. I.H. Marshall, Review of H.T.F.G., in E.Q., 37, 1965, pp.42-46.
269. Ibid.
270. Ibid.
271. Grant, Review of H.T.F.G.
272. Higgins, Historicity, p.15.
273. Ibid. p.17.
274. Ibid. p.39.
275. Ibid. p.68.
276. Ibid. p.68ff; the sayings are discussed under two headings, these embedded in Johannine discourses and those which do not stand within extended utterances of Jesus.
277. Ibid. p.82.
278. Dodd, The Gospel in the New Testament, p.75.
279. Dodd, Bible and Background, p.75.
280. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.7; he emphasised this on this page.
281. cf Ibid. p.7, which recalled his position in Thirty Years; he observed that Papias preferred oral tradition to the written word.
282. cf Ibid. p.413.
283. Ibid. p.424.
284. Ibid. p.329 cf Ibid. p.171f.
285. Ibid. p.171f.
286. cf e.g. Ibid. p.150, 244f, 246 and 78.
287. cf Ibid. p.227 and Ibid. p.225.

288. J.A.T. Robinson, Redating, S.C.M., 1976, p.263.
289. Ibid.
290. Ibid. citing H.T.F.G., pp. 59, 431, 138, 265, 288, 263, 387, 228, 138, 180, 217, 244, 431, 329, 243, 244, 226, 431.
291. Ibid. p.263f.
292. Ibid. p.264f citing H.T.F.G., p.312.
293. Ibid. p.265.
294. Ibid. p.266, citing H.T.F.G., p.222.
295. Wilder, p.306.
296. Marshall, p.45.
297. Brown, p.433.
298. Ibid.
299. Marshall, p.45.
300. Wikgren, p.236.
301. Hunter, p.146; Wikgren's review was entitled "A contribution to the New Quest".
302. Beare, p.521.
303. Brown, p.432.
304. R. Kysar, The Fourth Evangelist and his Gospel, Augsburg, 1975, p.65.
305. Kysar, Thesis, p.38.
306. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.8
307. D.A. Carson, Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel: After Dodd, What?, Gospel Perspectives II, J.S.O.T. Press, 1981, p.86.
308. Ibid. p.89.
309. Ibid. p.97.
310. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.167, in the course of the discussion of Mark 14.3-9, Luke 7.36-50, and John 12.2-8.
311. Carson, op cit p.128.
312. Ibid. p.127.
313. The adjectives are R.E. Brown's in Commentary, p.xlv, Dodd put forward the same approach.
314. Carson, op cit p.128f.
315. Ibid. p.107.
316. Brown, p.432.

317. Hunter, p.147.
318. cf Dodd, Review of Bernard, p.371.
319. Bligh, op cit p.280.
320. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.432.
321. Simon, p.191f.
322. For example, Theology and C.Q.R. allowed lengthy reviews to Interpretation; by contrast the slight reviews of H.T.F.G. were disappointing.
323. Grant, p.230.
324. cf Brown, p.430, "That the Fourth Gospel has little or no real value as a historical witness to the ministry of Jesus has remained one of the fundamental tenets (and weaknesses) of the Bultmannian and post-Bultmannian schools of exegesis. That a serious volume can be written on historical tradition in John by a scholar of Dodd's status is a sign that a change is setting in".



## Chapter VII.

### "There and back again".

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"There and back again".

In 1932 Dodd published a book for children with this title; it also seems an appropriate description of much of his work on the Johannine writings. The essential Doddian stance has never changed. Ideas formed very early in his career were held by Dodd until the end of that long career, when they often appeared strange and caused tensions and contradictions within his work. For the same reason, Dodd's work has not made the impact expected on recent Johannine scholarship and his position within the 'new look', which he did so much to undergird, seems so odd. Our intention is to discuss this strange situation and offer some tentative conclusions on Dodd's work.

Throughout this study we have placed Dodd's work in the context of Johannine studies in the English-speaking world. It is still possible to do so in the present chapter, although a change of situation must be noted. For the first time there is a radical breach between American and British scholarship, it may well be argued that American scholarship has become 'Continental'.<sup>(1)</sup> Moreover, in this period, while British scholarship has produced some significant commentaries, American scholarship has tended to produce seminal articles, although Brown's commentary has rightly been described as 'Magisterial'.<sup>(2)</sup> Indices may well be poor indicators of the impact of a scholar's work upon his colleagues, but, with this limitation noted, some interesting facts emerge. In the second edition of Barrett's commentary, Dodd is the second most cited authority, Bultmann being the first. Barrett's use of Dodd is not altogether typical of the current British scene; for example, Lindars cites Dodd comparatively rarely. The comparatively few citations of Dodd in Brown's commentary adequately indicates the present situation in American scholarship which is no longer interested in maintaining the dialogue with Dodd. While it would be a gross over-simplification to argue that Barrett has totally rehabilitated the major Doddian stance, he has prevented the total relinquishment of some Doddian positions and called into question a number

of theories which had apparently won the day. This is not to suggest that Barrett's position is identical to Dodd's. Further, Barrett noted that his commentary was 'old fashioned'. Instinctively British scholarship responds to Dodd. What Barrett wrote specifically of Dodd's account of the religious environment of the Fourth Evangelist may be cited as typical of much British reaction to all of Dodd's work on the Fourth Gospel, "No one could hold that account and its author in greater respect than I do."<sup>(3)</sup> This essential contrast between American and British scholarship has been epitomised in R. Kysar's "The Fourth Evangelist and his Gospel" and S.S. Smalley's "John, evangelist and interpreter". Kysar attempted to repeat W.F. Howard's work for his own generation, that is from the 1960's until the early 1970's, and Smalley, although working on a 'wider canvas', is firmly writing from within the 'new look'. Kysar has but five references to Dodd, whereas Smalley cites him most often, the second-most cited scholar being Brown.

#### The present situation.

For the most part any placing of Dodd's work in the context of Johannine studies in the late sixties and early seventies, will simply show how discontinuous so much of that work is with Dodd's own.

Kysar summarised six 'recent accomplishments' of Johannine study; these reflect accurately enough the state of current Johannine scholarship. There is traditional material in the Gospel which has evolved over the years through a complicated process.<sup>(4)</sup> It is essentially a 'community's document'.<sup>(5)</sup> Its milieu is nonconformist Judaism<sup>(6)</sup> and the dialogue between John's church and the synagogue is the determining element 'in the concrete situation of the Fourth Evangelist'.<sup>(7)</sup> Fifthly, "Research on the religious thought of the gospel demonstrates that it is an innovative and sophisticated mode of Christian thought radically Christocentric in all its expressions"<sup>(8)</sup> and, finally, the Johannine community is "A distinctive form of early Christian life and thought."<sup>(9)</sup>

None of this is necessarily inconsistent with the agenda that Dodd set for Johannine scholarship. At the end of "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel", he declared that "The tradition, envisaged as clearly as may be, must be set firmly in its total historical environment, by the use of all available evidence."<sup>(10)</sup> However, Dodd and much recent Johannine scholarship have gone different ways. Dodd naturally involved himself in the quest of the historical Jesus.<sup>(11)</sup> Much Johannine scholarship has tended to become much more involved in the quest of the historical Johannine community, as indeed we have suggested Dodd should have done. Dodd was one of the first British scholars to appreciate the value of Form criticism, but he did not, maybe could not, share one of its basis axioms; "Wellhausen and Bultmann were pioneers in insisting that the Gospels tell us primarily about the church situation in which they were written and only secondarily about the situation of Jesus which *prima facie* they describe".<sup>(12)</sup> Dodd could have accepted Brown's re-phrasing of this; "Primarily, the gospels tell us how the evangelist conceived of, and presented, Jesus to a Christian community in the last third of the first century, a presentation that indirectly gives us an insight into the community's life at the time when the gospel was written."<sup>(13)</sup> Whereas Brown argued that "The gospels offer limited means for reconstructing the ministry and message of the historical Jesus",<sup>(14)</sup> Dodd, whilst not contradicting this explicitly, believed that it was of the essential nature of a gospel to record reliable historical information.

It is difficult to assess the extent of Dodd's influence on recent Johannine scholarship. If we turn again to Kysar's six 'recent accomplishments', Dodd had done much to demonstrate the Fourth Gospel's use of an ancient tradition, although he did not concede the possibility of the 'rather complex process' of composition over a lengthy period because, while he would not have denied that the Gospel was in some sense a community's document, he saw the hand of the 'Master Propagator' of Christianity in Ephesus. For this reason, too, he did not accept that the milieu

of the Gospel is to be found in nonconformist Judaism. Whilst there are hints in his writings that the conflict/dialogue with the Synagogue is part of the background of the Gospel, these are not satisfactorily followed up and he would have denied that they were in any way a major part of the Johannine church situation. Doubtless Dodd would have accepted that the Fourth Gospel was Christocentric but he would have been unable to have accepted recent scholarship's reasons for this. To have accepted the sixth accomplishment, with its emphasis on the distinctive character of Johannine Christianity, would have involved Dodd withdrawing from his unitive understanding of primitive Christianity.

In the same survey Kysar enlarged upon four remaining vital questions. The first is "What are the contours of the traditional materials used by the evangelist?"<sup>(15)</sup> By this Kysar understands that "The task now before scholarship is to reach some greater degree of consensus between what is traditional and what is redactional in the gospel."<sup>(16)</sup> He was well aware of the difficulties occasioned by the sharp divergencies among the many source theories but in a later article he noted a growing consensus.<sup>(17)</sup> Dodd had been interested in this area, had indeed thought it promising and yet had come to reject it. In this rejection he was following a typical British approach. Secondly, "What was the character of the amorphous Judaism claimed by some to have been intellectual milieu of the evangelist?"<sup>(18)</sup> Dodd had some difficulty in dealing with anything that might be described as amorphous. Barrett commended Dodd for demonstrating that part of the background of 'The name of God' was to be found in Rabbinic meditations on the disasters that befell Israel in the period 70-135 A.D. and that such Rabbinic material came into being over a fairly long period of time but noted that he was not always mindful of this "And in general appears to be satisfied to consider the Judaism of the first century as a whole, as though what applied to the time of Jesus applied equally to the time of John, although one lies more than a generation before 70 A.D. and the other almost a generation after."<sup>(19)</sup> Dodd's

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centripetal approach extended to his consideration of Judaism; this is unsatisfactory. The third question can be posed because Dodd's solution, and those of others, has been rejected; "What are the categories which best enable us to apprehend the thought of the evangelist?"<sup>(20)</sup> Kysar emphasises that these have not yet been found; "Such a real comprehension of the way the mind of the evangelist works would release us from the sometimes fruitless discussion of Johannine ideas which seem to mirror the minds of the exegetes more than the evangelist."<sup>(21)</sup> The final question, simply posed, presents most problems; "What are the results of doing theological analysis of the gospel on the basis of the findings of the most recent literary and historical criticism?"<sup>(22)</sup> It is in this area that Kysar is most critical of recent Johannine scholarship.<sup>(23)</sup> If scholars did pursue this path, Kysar is sure that a breakthrough would come;

"What results would come from carefully distinguishing the thought of the evangelist from the thought of his traditional materials and from his later revisers? What would be the results if the theological analyst kept always before him or her the image of both the intellectual milieu of the evangelist and the concrete situation of the evangelist? The results, of course, would be an excitingly new perspective on the thought of the gospel."<sup>(24)</sup>

There is nothing new in this part of Kysar's agenda for Johannine scholarship; "There and back again" might well be applied to this scholarship in the whole period under review. This is not to express a cynicism but a fact. What is different, from time to time, is the understanding of the milieu of the Fourth Evangelist and his church situation. While Kysar and D.M. Smith before him might speak of a developing consensus with regard to the source criticism of the Fourth Gospel, there have always been significant scholars who have not shared in it.<sup>(25)</sup> Moreover, there is the inherent danger of circularity in the course that Kysar proposed.

Kysar's approach is much more typical of American than British scholarship. The pre-supposition of this approach is "That the theological

analysis of the gospel cannot be done simply on the gospel as it stands before us. The assumption will be debated by some, but it seems that attempting to discuss the thought of the gospel without fully comprehending the evangelist's use of tradition, or his intellectual or concrete situation is paramount to a dogmatic, pre-critical method."<sup>(26)</sup> If this were so, then much British scholarship, certainly that of Dodd, would be called into question. There is some truth in his contention that, for example, Dodd has been much more successful in his recovery of the Johannine tradition than in his understanding of how the Evangelist used it. There is, of course, nothing mandatory about this agenda that Kysar sets, and indeed, it might well be impossible. The radical difference between American and British scholarship at this point has been neatly summarised by S. Neil;

"Those of us who sat at the feet of Alexander Nairne learned long ago that theology is a department of the worship of the Church. Without adoration, no good theology. Dr. Dodd writes so well and movingly of the Fourth Gospel only because over twenty-five years he had drunk of its spirit, and learned that same attitude of adoring reverence face to face with the mystery of the Word made flesh, which is characteristic of the Fourth Evangelist."<sup>(27)</sup>

Such British scholarship has naturally believed that theological analysis of the Gospel can be done on the Gospel as it stands before us as scripture. It has achieved this well - not least in the commentaries of Barrett and Hoskyns and "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" - and it has not been bereft of critical acumen. Here Dodd stood firmly in the tradition of British scholarship.

### Scholarship's influence on Dodd.

Such influence was small; even what he reviewed so appreciatively never seems to have been followed up in his published work. In his eighty-eighth year Dodd acknowledged a method other than his own, "He (Brown) would seem to have read nearly everything written on this subject this century" - that might conceivably have been true of Dodd - and "His use of such secondary sources is acute and discriminating."<sup>(28)</sup> This was not true of Dodd, Dillistone sees formidable strength here; "If he (Dodd) did not know sources at first-hand, he would not guide. This was typical of his method. Many have remarked on the absence of reference to other scholars in his work. This was indicative of his concentration on primary sources."<sup>(29)</sup> This is a poor comparison; while it is indeed the task of the scholar to concentrate on primary sources, it is also the duty of the scholar to consider the work of his colleagues. There were criticisms to which Dodd should have responded. Frequently, rather than discuss such criticisms, which were damaging to his central thesis, Dodd repeated his thesis. One example will suffice. In his "Christianity according to Saint John", Howard made use of Pribnow's conclusion that a whole range of words common in the language of Hellenistic religion are missing in the Fourth Gospel. In his review of Howard's book, Dodd simply repeated his central thesis. In exactly the same way he did not grapple with the implications of Kilpatrick's work in the same area.<sup>(30)</sup> Dodd had a picture of the Fourth Evangelist and his Gospel which he could not change. There is little doubt that Dodd's work would have benefited from a more realistic dialogue with contemporary scholarship.

The difficulty in assessing Dodd's work - and indeed in discovering his position on some matters - is deciding what importance to attach to his reviews. There is no doubt that Dodd knew what he was not prepared to concede. In response to Robinson's redating of the Fourth Gospel, Dodd adamantly held to his understanding.<sup>(31)</sup> The real problem arises when it appears as though Dodd might have changed his mind. In 1973, in two



publications, Robinson drew attention to such an apparent change of mind. In "The use of the Fourth Gospel for Christology today" and "The human face of God", Robinson argued that in John 1.14 we are dealing with a parable. This would be another example of a parabolic basis for the father-son language in the Fourth Gospel. Our concern is with Dodd's comment, "I think we should now agree that the true rendering is 'a father's only son', the statement being, as in other similar passages, essentially a parable."<sup>(32)</sup> This comment was conveyed in a letter to Robinson about the same time as Dodd described the Prologue as a "Profoundly philosophical statement, and its philosophy, as it appears to me, underlies the whole Gospel and provides a necessary clue to many of its secrets."<sup>(33)</sup> Quite apart from the fact that this comment shows Dodd able and willing to grapple with new ideas so late in his career, too much must not be built on such appreciative comments. It would have been interesting to have seen how Dodd could have used this 'parable' in his essentially metaphysical understanding of the Prologue. I suggest that Dodd could not have used it for it would have involved the negation of his primary understanding of the Prologue still seen so clearly in his review of Brown's commentary.

What also emerges from this brief discussion is that there is a tendency in certain circles to seek the implicit approval of Dodd, the then acknowledged doyen of of British New Testament scholars. This is not to make a 'cheap' point but to assert that English-speaking scholarship was more influenced by Dodd than ever he was by it.

### The Doddian consistency.

Dodd throughout his long career had been consistent in his understanding of the background, date, place and purpose of the Fourth Gospel. The extent of this consistency may easily be gauged from his review of Brown's commentary. This was published in 1972, but in all essentials it could have come from Dodd's pen at any time after the early thirties. Consistency is not inherently bad, but this is an isolated and insulated one in that Dodd did not take account of either the work of other scholars or discoveries like the Dead Sea Scrolls. Further, this consistency has been maintained at the expense of a contradictory understanding of tradition and has led him in the interest of his dominating picture of the Fourth Evangelist and his Gospel to have ignored his own discovery of the Church/Synagogue situation as part of both the background and purpose of the Fourth Gospel. Dodd consistently held the belief that in the Fourth Gospel we have the most developed re-statement of the common New Testament message. For Dodd this involved a comparatively late date, from the late nineties of the first century to the very early twenties of the second century, and his reasons for this late date do not spring, as he suggested in his letter to Robinson, from the Fourth Gospel itself, but rather from his picture of the Evangelist as the 'Master Propagator' of Christianity to the Hellenistic world. This picture was classically set forth in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" and, as we have seen, a number of reviewers made very damaging criticisms. The determining feature in Dodd's total understanding of the Fourth Gospel is this picture of the Fourth Evangelist as one who, in the interests of the fullest expression of Christianity, perfectly fused Jewish and Hellenistic categories so impregnated with the Christian tradition for the propagation of the Gospel. In his classical period little justice was done to the Jewish side of the perfect fusion. There remains the possibility that Dodd has made the Fourth Evangelist in his own image; in Kysar's own words, "The historical judgement that the fourth evangelist wedded the Platonic

and Hebraic perspectives into one for the propagation of the Christian faith may suggest Dodd's own commitment to both of these perspectives and his interest in articulating the Christian faith by a means of a blending of these perspectives."<sup>(34)</sup> This led Dodd to deny one of his own insights. No one had stressed the centripetal nature of the New Testament more than Dodd, yet when Bernard and Hoskyns sought to understand the Fourth Gospel from within the Biblical/Christian tradition alone, he roundly criticised them. Bernard and Hoskyns had a more consistent understanding of the centripetal approach to the New Testament than Dodd, for whom the centripetality had to embrace both the higher religions of paganism and Greek philosophy.

His tenacity in holding to this picture of the Evangelist has led him to the ultimately contradictory picture of tradition, which has been discussed in the previous chapter. Dodd was given an opportunity to change this in his review of Brown's commentary with its five-stage model of the composition of the Gospel. Brown saw an intimate relationship between the Evangelist and the tradition throughout the first four stages, whereas Dodd had seen a secondhand one. When Dodd discussed Brown's theory he did so not in terms of its assisting us to understand the relationship of the Evangelist to the tradition, but in terms of its aiding us to "Clarify the movement of thought, with its sometimes surprising transitions."<sup>(35)</sup>

Having rediscovered the importance of the Church/Synagogue situation as part of the background of the tradition behind the Fourth Gospel, Dodd's understanding of the Evangelist prevented him from following it up. This has involved Dodd in presenting a picture of the Evangelist as one who went, how we are not told, to a tradition whose interests were utterly different from those of his public, even taking over set pieces which apparently have little to say to that public.<sup>(36)</sup>

Dodd has consistently argued that Christianity is a historical religion. It was natural for Dodd to argue that the tradition behind

the Fourth Gospel was an historical tradition. Behind his obvious preference for the Johannine tradition in his reconstruction of the life and teaching of Jesus in "The Founder of Christianity" seems to be the pre-supposition that the most developed restatement of the common New Testament message contained the most reliable historical tradition. The weakness here is that the position assumes that the Evangelist was as interested in the historical as Dodd himself was. That may be so but it is strange that Dodd took so long to grapple with the essential historical problems of the Johannine tradition. It is even more surprising when it is observed that this preference for the Johannine tradition was a radical change of opinion from his position in his review of Bernard's commentary. Lest this be thought a severe judgement, it is necessary to recall that Dodd's position in "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" existed as long ago as 1926. In a major work, Dodd never discussed the essential problems and in these works we never get beyond the equation that traditional equals historically reliable. We have argued that Dodd's use of the Johannine and Synoptic tradition in "The Founder of Christianity" is essentially 'pre-critical'. Thus, whilst his extensive use of the Johannine tradition in "The Founder of Christianity" is discontinuous with his early work, Dodd's insistence that there is an ancient historical tradition behind the Fourth Gospel is continuous with some of his earliest work. Yet, without the extensive study hinted at, at the end of "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel", Dodd's work in this field is ultimately unsatisfying.

### Minor changes of stance.

There have been a number of minor changes in Dodd's position. To describe these changes as minor is to suggest that some of them were already implicit in Dodd's understanding and that none of them led him to a radical reassessment of his approach to, and understanding of, the Fourth Gospel.

Dodd is rightly remembered as one who changed his mind about the historical value of the Fourth Gospel. It was a significant change of mind, but it must be remembered that as early as 1921 Dodd was indicating an area in which the Fourth Gospel was an important source of reliable historical information.<sup>(37)</sup> He never totally wrote off the historical value of the Fourth Gospel. Secondly, he changed his position over the relationship of the Fourth Gospel to the Synoptics. It was another significant change in that Dodd had gone some long way towards establishing the Fourth Gospel's dependence on the Synoptics. Both of these changes spring from the long-held view that behind the Fourth Gospel there is an ancient tradition and in neither area was Dodd's work initially innovative. These two changes, thought by so many reviewers to be the most significant, are of less importance than many reviewers of Dodd's work believe, and owe much to consistent strands within his work. For these changes to be considered really significant, Dodd would have had to discuss in depth the questions he postponed at the end of "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel". There is no evidence to suggest that he could have discussed these other than in the context of his definitive stance and indeed it would have been very difficult to have discussed them in that context. That this is so, may be seen from the strange juxtaposition of the classical Doddian stance and the stress on the historical value of the Johannine tradition in "The Founder of Christianity" where the reader is presented with an antimony rather than a harmony.

Dodd abandoned his search for written sources behind the Fourth

Gospel. He came to stress the essentially oral nature of the tradition, yet still admitted the possibility of some written material. The insistence on oral tradition, within the context of his own admission about the possibility of written material, required more defending than Dodd was prepared to give it. Some scholars, in their search for written sources, were stimulated by Dodd's work. Nicol argues that

"C.H. Dodd made many observations which may point to a semeia source. By means of form criticism in the wider sense he tried to identify the traditional material in the Gospel. In general he regarded as traditional that material which bore more resemblance to the form and content of the Synoptic traditions than to the typical Johannine theological themes. In the case of all seven miracles, he thought that the Evangelist used a short story from the tradition, and in many instances his divisions between the traditional and Johannine material coincided exactly with the divisions of source criticism."(38)

Thus, although Dodd has explicitly refused to embark upon the quest for written sources, and had indeed maintained that the early Church was not a 'bookish community', much current search for written sources is not as discontinuous with Dodd's work as may appear. Indeed, Dodd's work has given it some stimulus. He would have been surprised by this but he was apparently not aware of the significance of the concession about written aide-mémoire, though doubtless he would have denied that these were sources as such.

In common with much British scholarship Dodd came to see that any reordering of the text of the Fourth Gospel created as many problems as it solved. It is doubtful whether this is in itself significant. It might well have come from a determination to come to terms with the profundity of the Evangelist's mind and Dodd's attempt in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" will always be significant.

The final change of mind concerns the definition of Gnosticism.

In his earlier years, certainly including the period of his work on the Johannine Epistles, Dodd was prepared to find a setting for the Fourth Gospel within Gnosticism, understood as a pre-Christian movement, of which the Hermetica was a part. Later he came to understand it in the traditional British way as a Christian heresy (or heresies). He no longer considered the Hermetica as associated with Gnosticism. One result was that he continued to place a high value on the Hermetica but placed a much lower value on Gnosticism.

#### The Johannine Epistles.

It is difficult to assess the impact of Dodd on current scholarship. English-speaking scholarship still awaits a major commentary on the Johannine Epistles. This scholarship has not got beyond a dialogue with Dodd even though its interests, as reflected in Houlden's commentary and Painter's study, are not really continuous with those of Dodd. We have argued that Dodd's work in this area is dated, mainly because of his picture of the Fourth Evangelist and his deficient understanding of sectarian Judaism. In this area, too, Dodd did not enter into a discussion with his critics. There is little to suggest that any major Doddian insight will be rehabilitated in any forthcoming work.

### Conclusions.

According to Caird, Dodd intended to write a commentary on the Fourth Gospel; in the event it was not even begun. For many, the climax of Dodd's career was his receiving "The New English Bible" in Westminster Abbey on 16th March, 1970.<sup>(39)</sup> Caird suggests that his work on this project prevented his even beginning the commentary. There is no attempt whatever to belittle Dodd's achievement here, or indeed the amount of work that it must have involved but it seems doubtful whether this could have been the reason for his not writing the commentary. A glance at the bibliography of Dodd's writings shows that he was still very active in this period which was marked by the revision of the Sarum Lectures. In publishing terms Dodd seems to have been as active in this period as any other. Thus it becomes difficult to avoid the conclusion that he chose not to write the commentary. Any reasons can only be speculative, and of little value, but it might tentatively be suggested that Dodd was not prepared at this stage in his career for that radical questioning of his definitive stance that any such commentary would appear to have involved.

Whatever the explanation, it is a matter of regret that his Johanne studies are less complete than he intended.

At the end of his study, Kysar summarised a number of Doddian pre-suppositions. Many of these were typical of English-speaking scholarship of the time, and many scholars found their instinctive approach vindicated in Dodd's masterly studies. Kysar declared that Dodd "Has a predilection to deal with the historical questions posed by the text;"<sup>(40)</sup> by this he meant that Dodd was especially concerned with questions of historical background and historical tradition. Dodd's interests and those of many of his colleagues coincided at this point. Within the earlier part of our period when most British New Testament scholars were thoroughly educated in the classics, sometimes to the exclusion of the study of Aramaic and Hebrew, Dodd's insistence that the Fourth Gospel is a skilful fusion



of the Hellenistic and Hebraic - in that order! - was welcomed and seen as the vindication of the typical British approach to the Fourth Gospel. Dodd's picture of the Evangelist as a mature and versatile thinker struck a chord within British scholarship, which had frequently found in the Fourth Gospel a support for its theological understanding of Christianity. For Dodd, and for the majority of British scholars, theology is metaphysical. What Kysar wrote specifically of Dodd has a much wider application;

"Theology for him is metaphysical by its very definition, it would seem. Hence, theological thought is correctly speculative in nature. Consequently, Dodd expects New Testament passages to make metaphysical assertions about such matters as creation, Christology, soteriology etc. Theology, Dodd seems to imply, structures a system by which the Christian apprehends and articulates the nature of reality itself."<sup>(41)</sup>

British scholars also generally responded positively to his consistent claim that theology is historically grounded, that is, that the ultimately real has been revealed in the history of Israel, and totally in the historical Jesus. Dodd did not deny the possibility of revelation elsewhere; in fact, he operates within an understanding of natural theology which many held at this time.

Thus, Dodd was writing from within a congenial atmosphere to those who would most naturally respond within that atmosphere. Dodd was the outstanding scholar of his generation and the natural leader of those who shared his basic approach. English-speaking scholarship has no alternative but to come to terms with the very different approaches of Dodd and Bultmann to the Johannine literature in the knowledge that each scholar has found his definitive understanding of Christianity classically expressed there.

Neither of Dodd's great works on the Fourth Gospel is innovative. In the early part of our period, Dodd's work for the most part reflected 'current orthodoxy'; where he did not, it was in his refusal to totally

write off the historical value of the Fourth Gospel. The flowering of Doddian Johannine studies would appear to be in the late nineteen thirties when much work that was to culminate in "The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel" began. This book, so widely appreciated, has in fact dated very rapidly; it was almost a 'child out of its times' before it was published. Here the definitive Doddian stance achieved classical expression. Thus, whilst his later writings also reflected 'current orthodoxy' notably in his insistence upon the historical tradition behind the Fourth Gospel, Dodd stressed, almost contra mundum, the essentially valuable Hellenistic background of the Fourth Gospel. While Dodd's later work has established the extent of the tradition behind the Fourth Gospel, many scholars were at work in this field, and, whilst "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" is the climax of the era begun by P. Gardner-Smith, Dodd never satisfactorily asked the questions that should have been put at this time. As it stands, his large work leaves us with tradition in the Fourth Gospel, not necessarily historical tradition, unless one shares the presupposition that all Christian tradition must be historical. To his own satisfaction Dodd demonstrated the historical value of the Johannine tradition and used it extensively in the reconstruction of the life and teaching of Jesus in "The Founder of Christianity". In this he was innovative. For the most part the effect of his work was to place Johannine studies in a 'larger room'.

"There and back again" is a just verdict on Dodd's Johannine studies. Notwithstanding the significance of the minor changes of stance, Dodd set the agenda for his Johannine scholarship very early in his career. The tensions apparent in "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel" spring from "There" being Ephesus at the end of the first century. "There and back again" is also a fair verdict on Johannine scholarship in the period under review, for the interests and possibilities that were seen as important in the opening conspectus are also possible now.

Whatever criticisms may be made of Dodd's Johannine work, it is certain that no other English-speaking scholar has made a comparable contribution to Johannine studies, even if, at the present time, the limitations of his work are more obvious than they have been at any other time.

By his own severe criterion, Dodd's work and that of his colleagues were failures; "I am disposed to think that the understanding of this Gospel is not only one of the outstanding tasks of our times, but the crucial test of our success or failure in solving the problem of the New Testament as a whole."<sup>(42)</sup> With the benefit of hindsight, it is not Dodd's work, nor indeed that of his colleagues, that is to be criticised but the establishing of that criterion. The establishing of that criterion suggests that Dodd was not aware of the real complexities of the Johannine problems. Dodd's work stands in the need of revision. Ironically, we still require definitive studies in the area that Dodd thought so distinguished New Testament scholarship in the earliest years of this century when "Our science moved from anatomy to oecology, the study of the organism in its habitat."<sup>(43)</sup> The difference is that the 'habitat' is not the wider Graeco-Roman world but the Johannine community. That this task still remains is an indication that Dodd's Johannine work has not succeeded in that area where probably he thought it easily would. That the task can still be phrased in Dodd's words is a tantalising reminder of both his greatness as a scholar and the fact that at times he charted a course for his colleagues which he himself could not follow.

Finally, it remains to ask whether this is a course any scholar can take. Nineham, with whose work we have compared that of Dodd, apparently thought that this was a possible course. As late as 1977 he wrote

"I would have them (New Testament scholars) be scrupulously careful to see that all New Testament language and ideas were interpreted in their own context...for our purpose it is essential that the presuppositions in the light of which the text is interpreted

should be the doctrines -felt-as-facts by first century men, and not by the fathers, the Reformers or people of our time." (44)

He argued

"One thing, however, is certain; if this process of passing over to primitive Christianity is to be truly enriching, it must be genuinely the Christianity of the New Testament to which we pass over. Some words of the American literary-critic Lionel Trilling are apposite at this point: 'it is (he writes) only if we are aware of the reality of the past as past that we can feel it as alive and present. If, for example, we try to make Shakespeare literally contemporaneous, we make him monstrous. He is contemporaneous only if we know how much a man of his own age he was; he is relevant to us only if we see his distance from us'." (45)

Whilst Nineham apparently thinks that the course is a possible one, he accepts Schweitzer's conclusions that the historical Jesus

"was bound to be 'to our time a stranger and an enigma', incapable of 'being made sympathetic and universally intelligible to the multitude by a popular historical treatment'. Could that language be used of the founder of Christianity as pictured by C.H. Dodd or of the existentialist Jesus of Bultmann and his followers, with his very twentieth-century refusal to furnish any credentials or to make any messianic claims? Are not these woefully hybrid figures, precisely the products of reading an ancient text through modern spectacles?" (46)

Stanton asks the relevant question, "Can the interpreter shed his own cultural and religious heritage and become, in effect, a first century man?" (47) Dodd's well known picture of the ideal interpreter suggests that he could but the criticisms rightly levelled at "The Founder of Christianity" suggest that he was not successful in doing so. Stanton himself suggests that, whilst it is difficult to understand a different cultural era, it is not impossible. He cites with approval Nineham's suggestion that we 'pass

over' into the minds of the Biblical writers. Stanton warns

"If our exercise of imagination is to be more than an intuitive 'jump' or mere guess work, however, sound critical methods will be needed in order to recover the original meaning of the text. We shall also need to make sure that we are not indulging in what has been called the 'popular short-cut' of putting oneself into the skin of Moses or Paul. Since my name is neither Moses nor Paul, the historical method is needed to ensure that the gap between 'then' and 'now' is not obliterated."<sup>(48)</sup>

This has been cited at length because yet again it illustrates that Dodd set the essential agenda for so much of this area of New Testament scholarship. However, Dodd was more successful in going "there" than he was in coming "back again", to use the title of his story for children, but this does not invalidate the procedure that he outlined. Even in going "there" Dodd travelled with the 'luggage' of his own presuppositions. It was precisely these suppositions that actually enlightened an important aspect of the first century which would have remained obscure without Dodd's work.

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1. In a discussion of this chapter with Professor Lindars, he told me how so many modern American scholars had chosen to continue their studies in continental universities.
2. The adjective is C.K. Barrett's.
3. Barrett, The Gospel of John and Judaism, S.P.C.K., 1975, p.63.
4. of Kysar, Fourth Evangelist, p.267.
5. Ibid. p.269.
6. of Ibid. p.270.
7. Ibid. p.272.
8. Ibid. p.273.
9. Ibid. p.275.
10. Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.432.
11. of Ibid., where he looked forward to a "resumption of the quest of the historical Jesus".
12. R.E. Brown, Johannine ecclesiology - the Community's origins, Interpretation, 31, 1977, p.380.
13. Ibid. of Dodd, H.T.F.G., p.7.
14. Ibid.
15. Kysar, Fourth Evangelist, p.277.
16. Ibid.
17. R. Kysar, The source analysis of the Fourth Gospel - a growing consensus? J.B.L., 15, 1973, pp.134-52.
18. Kysar, Fourth Evangelist, p.278.
19. Barrett, The Gospel of John and Judaism, p.64; Barrett made a similar criticism of Dodd's handling of "Hellenistic Judaism: Philo of Alexandria" in Interpretation in that, while he comes to the same conclusion as Barrett, Dodd's discussion is limited to Philo. Barrett noted that a full fifty years stands between the death of Philo and the publication of the Fourth Gospel and this period saw changes as significant as the period 1917-1967.
20. Kysar, Fourth Evangelist, p.279.
21. Ibid. p.280.
22. Ibid.
23. of Ibid. "The very failure of some contemporary scholarship has been in this area. Critics of the thought of the gospel do not avail themselves of a well-defined view of source-tradition and composition criticism of the gospel".

24. Ibid.
25. cf Barrett, Commentary, II, p.15.
26. Kysar, Fourth Evangelist, p.280f.
27. Dillistone, op cit p.168, where he cites the conclusion of Neill's review of Interpretation.
28. Dodd, Review of Brown, p.18.
29. Dillistone, op cit p.158. For a radically different assessment of Carson op cit p.92; "Fuller praises H.T.F.G.'s lack of interaction with secondary literature. 'Most of us Neutestsmentler', he says 'spend our time taking in each other's dirty washing and decking it out with extensive bibliographical footnotes. Dr. Dodd's work is refreshingly independent, with an absolute minimum of that type of footnote'. But quite a number of others interpret the same evidence far more negatively. William E. Hull objects in particular to Dodd's failure to interact with the source critics, with A. Guilding's thesis, and with Cullmann. A.J.B. Higgins has similar complaints, and Ernst Haenchen is utterly blistering on Dodd's failure to interact with German scholarship."
30. cf Dodd's Review of Strachan, p.50. Kilpatrick's arguments as set forth in The religious background of the Fourth Gospel and What John tells us about John, have already been discussed.
31. cf Robinson, Redating, p.359, "But I still feel that the Fourth Gospel has reasons of its own for resisting attempts to place it very early in the time scale".
32. Dodd, quoted by Robinson in The use of the Fourth Gospel for Christology today in Lindars and Smalley Christ and Spirit in the New Testament, C.U.P., 1973, p.76; cf Robinson The Human face of God, S.C.M., 1973, p.187f.
33. Dodd, Review of Brown, p.21f.
34. Kysar, Thesis, p.416.
35. Dodd, Review of Brown, p.19.
36. cf Ibid. p.20, where Dodd seems to accept Brown's understanding of chapter 6, where the discourse "Appears to follow somewhat closely the pattern of Jewish synagogal homilies. It might have been, in substance, a homily for a Christian celebration of the Passover. In any case, it comes from a Jewish-Christian milieu, and must be supposed to belong to a very early stage in the composition of the Gospel". In The Jewish Christian Church in the Fourth Gospel, J.B.L., 74, 1955, pp.89-92, E.L. Allen put forward an argument that anticipated much recent scholarship in this area. Referring to Dodd's discussion in Interpretation - to which we have referred - Allen suggested that "Perhaps it is because the subject is so delicate that C.H. Dodd virtually passes it over in his recent study". Dodd was theoretically in the position where his own work would have enabled him to make a significant contribution in this area.
37. cf The Close, with specific reference to 6.15.
38. W. Nicol, The Semeia in the Fourth Gospel: tradition and redaction, Brill, 1972, p.12.

39. cf Dillistone op cit p.212, citing a letter from Dodd, which included the words "The presentation of the complete N.E.B. in the Abbey on Monday was a moving occasion and for me in particular. When I realized some years ago what a long job it was going to be I scarcely expected to live to see it finished, and I felt deeply thankful that I had been spared".
40. Kysar, Thesis, p.414.
41. Ibid. p.418.
42. Dodd, Inaugural, p.29.
43. Ibid. p.13.
44. D.E. Nineham, Explorations in Theology, I, S.C.M., 1977, p.161. This was originally given as the Ethel M. Wodd lecture New Testament Interpretation in an Historical Age, and published by Athlone Press, 1976.
45. Ibid. p.163.
46. Ibid. p.164, citing A. Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus.
47. G.N. Stanton, Interpreting the New Testament Today, Inaugural Lecture, King's College, London, and published by the college in 1979, p.10.
48. Ibid. p.15f.



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Abbreviation used in footnotes.Books and Articles by C.H. Dodd.

Eucharistic Symbolism.	"Eucharistic Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel".
The Close.	"The Close of the Galilaean Ministry".
Eschatological Element.	"The Eschatological Element in the New Testament and its Permanent Significance".
Authority.	<u>The Authority of the Bible.</u>
Review of Bernard.	Review of J.H. Bernard, "St. John".
Bible and Background.	<u>The Bible and its Background.</u>
Eucharistic and Fellowship.	"The Eucharist in Relation to the Fellowship of the Church".
Present Tendencies.	"Present Tendencies in the Criticism of the Gospels".
Miracles.	"Miracles in the Gospels".
Background.	"The Background of the Fourth Gospel".
Parables.	<u>The Parables of the Kingdom.</u>
Apostolic Preaching.	<u>The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments.</u>
Inuagural.	<u>The Present Task in New Testament Studies.</u>
1JFG.	"The First Epistle of John and the Fourth Gospel".
Revelation.	"Constructive Theology: Revelation".
Review of Hoskyns.	Review of E.C. Hoskyns and F.N. Davey, "The Fourth Gospel".
Review of Strachan.	Review of R.H. Strachan, "The Fourth Gospel: its Significance and Environment" and W.F. Howard, "Christianity according to St. John".
Commentary	<u>The Johannine Epistles.</u>
Thirty Years.	"Thirty Years of New Testament Studies".
Review of Cullmann.	Review of O. Cullmann "Les Sacrements dans l'Evangile Johannique: la vie de Jésus et le culte de l'église primitive".
Interpretation.	<u>The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel.</u>
Dialogue.	"The Dialogue Form in the Gospels".
Herrenworte.	"Some Johannine 'Herrenworte' with Parallels in the Synoptic Gospels".
Behind.	"A L'arrière-plan d'un dialogue Johannique".

Prologue.	"The Prologue to the Fourth Gospel and Christian Worship".
Hidden Parable.	"Une parabole cachée dans le quatrième Evangile".
HTFG.	<u>Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel.</u>
Portrait.	"The Portrait of Jesus in John and in the Synoptics".
Founder.	<u>The Founder of Christianity.</u>
Review of Brown.	"The Gospel according to John. A review Article".

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Higgins, Historicity.	A.J.B. Higgins, <u>The Historicity of the Fourth Gospel.</u>
Howard, Christianity.	W.F. Howard, <u>Christianity according to St. John.</u>
Howard, Fourth Gospel.	W.F. Howard, <u>The Fourth Gospel in recent criticism and interpretation.</u>
Kysar, Fourth Evangelist.	R.D. Kysar, <u>The Fourth Evangelist and his Gospel.</u>
Kysar, Thesis.	R.D. Kysar, <u>A comparison of the exegetical presuppositions and methods of C.H. Dodd and Rudolf Bultmann in the interpretation of the Fourth Gospel.</u>
Peake, <u>First Edition.</u>	A.S. Peake, <u>A Commentary on the Bible.</u>
Peake, <u>Revised Edition.</u>	Matthew Black and H.H. Rowley, <u>Peake's Commentary on the Bible.</u>
Robinson, Redating.	J.A.T. Robinson, <u>Redating the New Testament.</u>
Robinson, Twelve.	J.A.T. Robinson, <u>Twelve New Testament Studies.</u>
Smalley, John.	S.S. Smalley, <u>John: Evangelist and Interpreter.</u>



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Brown, After etc.	R.E. Brown, "After Bultmann, what? An introduction to the post-Bultmannians".
CBE.	<u>Essays on some Biblical questions of the day by members of the University of Cambridge.</u>
Howard, Common Authorship.	W.F. Howard, "The common authorship of the Johannine Gospel and Epistles".
Robinson, Destination.	J.A.T. Robinson, "The destination and purpose of the Johannine Epistles".

Reviews.

After the first mention which gives full details, all reviews are referred to thus:-

<u>Barton,</u>	J.H. Barton, Review of <u>The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel</u> , <u>The Clergy Review</u> .
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Journals.

B.J.R.L.	Bulletin of the John Rylands Library.
C.B.Q.	Catholic Biblical Quarterly.
C.Q.R.	Church Quarterly Review.
Exp. Tim.	Expository Times.
J.B.L.	Journal of Biblical Literature.
J.T.S.	Journal of Theological Studies (both old and new series).
N.T.	Novum Testamentum.
N.T.S.	New Testament Studies.
S.J.T.	Scottish Journal of Theology.
Z.N.W.	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche.
E.T.	English Translation.